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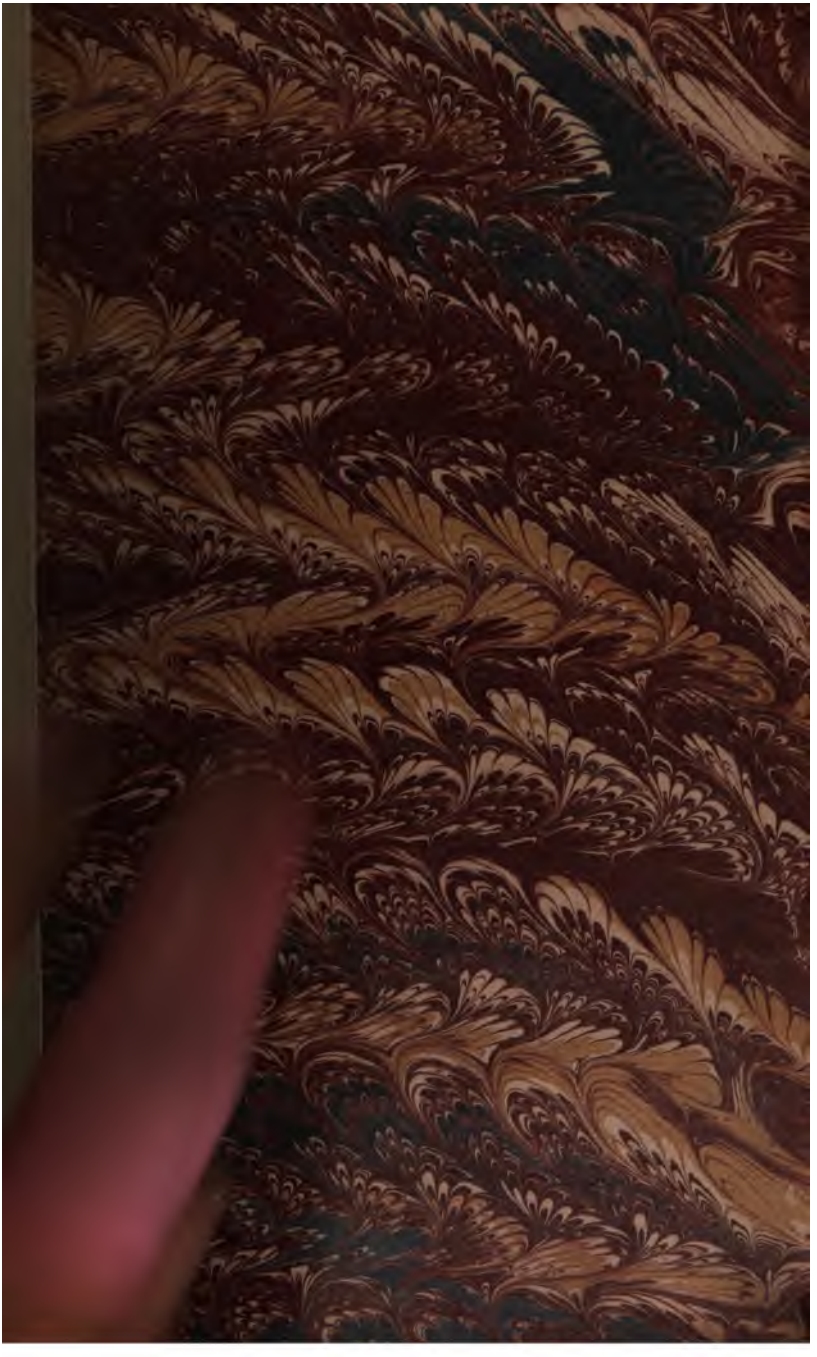

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THE CANTERBURY TALES OF CHAUCER.
VOL. III.

EDITED BY T. WRIGHT, ESQ.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

A NEW TEXT

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE

NOTES

EDITED BY

THOMAS WRIGHT, ESQ., M.A., F.S.A., ETC.

Corresponding Member of the Institute of France (Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres)

VOLUME THE THIRD

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THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGE OF THE MONKES TALE.

Whan ended was my tale of Melibé,
And of Prudence and hire benignité,
Oure hoste sayde, "As I am faithful man,
And by the precious corpus Madryan!
I hadde lever than a barel ale
That gode leef my wyf had herd this tale.
For sche is no thing of such pacience
As was this Melibeus wyf dame Prudence.
By Goddes boones! whan I bete my knaves,
Sche bringeth me forth the grete clobbet staves,
And crieth, 'slee the dogges everychon!
And breke of hem bothe bak and bon!'
And if that eny neghebour of myne
Wol nought to my wyf in chirche enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,
Whan sche comth hom, sche rampeth in my face,
And crieth, 'false coward, wreke thy wyf!
By corpes bones! I wil have thy knyf,
And thou schalt have my distaf and go spynne.'

15378—*corpus Madryan.* Urry explains this as referring to the relics of St. Materne of Treves.

Fro day to night right thus sche wil bygynne;
'Allas!' sche saith, 'that ever I was i-schape,
To wedde a mylk-sop or a coward ape,
That wil be over-lad with every wight!
Thou darst nought stonde by thy wyves right.'
This is my lif, but if that I wil fight;
And out atte dore anoon I most me dight,
And ellis I am lost, but if that I
Be lik a wilde leoun fool-hardy.
I wot wel sche wol do me sle som day
Som neighebor, and thanne renne away.
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar not hir withstonde.
For sche is big in armes, by my faith!
That schal he fynde that hire mysdoth or saith.
But let us passe away fro this matiere.
My lord the monk," quod he, "be mery of chere,
For ye schul telle a tale trewely.
Lo, Rowchestre stant heer faste by.
Ryde forth, myn oughne lord, brek nought oure game!
But, by my trouthe, I can not youre name;
Whether schal I calle yow my lord dan Johan,
Or daun Thomas, or elles dan Albon?
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kyn?
I vow to God thou hast a fulfair skyn!
It is a gentil pasture ther thou gost;
Thow art not lik a penaunt or a goost.
Upon my faith, thou art an officer,
Som worthy sexteyn, or some celerer;
For, by my fader soule, as to my doome,

Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom,
No pover cloysterer, ne non novys,
But a governour bothe wily and wys;
And therwithal of brawne and of bones
A wel faryng persone for the noones.
I praye God give him confusioun,
That first the broughte to religioun!
Thow woldist han be a trede-foul aright;
Haddist thou as gret a leve as thou hast might
To performe al thi wil in engendrure,
Thow haddist bigeten many a creature.
Allas! why werest thou so wyd a cope?
God gif me sorwe! and I were a pope,
Nought only thou, but every mighty man,
Though he were schore brode upon his pan,
Schuld han a wif; for al this world is lorn,
Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of tredyng, and we burel men ben schrympes;
Of feble trees ther cometh feble ympes.
This makith that oure heires ben so sclender
And feble, that thay may not wel engender.
This maketh that oure wyfes wol assaye
Religious folk, for thay may bettre paye
Of Venus payementes than may we.

15424—*a maister*. The Harl. MS. reads *an officer*, which probably slipped in by the negligence of a scribe, who had those words on his ear from line 15421. The present reading is given from the Lansd. MS. and Tyrwhitt.

15426—*bothe*. I have added this word as apparently necessary to the metre, though found neither in the Harl. MS nor Lansd. MS.

15432—*thou hast*. These words are added from the Lansd. MS., and seem necessary to the sense and metre.

God woot, no lusscheburghes paye ye!
But beth nought wroth, my lorde, though I play,
For oft in game a soth I have herd say." 15450
This worthy monk took al in pacience,
And saide, "I wol doon al my diligence,
Als fer as souneth into honesté,
To telle yow a tale, or tuo or thre;
And if yow lust to herken hider-ward,
I will yow say the lif of seint Edward,
Or elles first tregedis wil I yow telle,

15448—*lusscheburghes.* A somewhat similar comparison occurs in Piers Ploughman, l. 10322.

"Ac there is a defaute in the folk
That the feith kepeth;
Wherfore folk is the febler,
And noght ferm of bileve,
As in *lussheburwes* is a luther alay
And yet loketh he like a sterlyng.
The merk of that monee is good,
Ac the metal is feeble."

In fact, the coin alluded to was a base money (a *luther*, or bad, *alay*), which was brought into this country in considerable quantities in the times of the first Edwards, and, as we see from the specimens existing, it must when new have easily passed for the sterling money of the English kings. The name appears to have been derived from its being struck at Luxemburg, by the counts. The annexed cut represents one of these coins; the legend on the obverse, GVALE DE LVSENE., and on the reverse MONETA SERENE. It was struck by Gualeran, count of Luxemburg, in the latter end of the 13th century.

All sorts of false money appear to have been continually brought into this country in the Middle Ages; but these *lusscheburghes* seem to have been the greatest cause of annoyance. In the year 1346 the petition of the Commons in the parliament assembled at Westminster, pointed out several mal-practices which were supposed to be the cause of the scarcity of good money at that time, and began with stating, that many merchants and others carried the good money out of the realm, and brought in its room false money called *lussheboures*, which were worth only eight shillings the pound, or

Of which I have an hundred in my celle.
Tregedis is to sayn a certeyn storie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie,
Of hem that stood in greet prosperité,
And is y-fallen out of heigh degré
Into miserie, and endith wrecchedly;
And thay ben versifyed comunly
Of six feet, which men clepe exametron.
In prose ben eek endited many oon;
In metre eek, in many a sondry wise;
Lo, this declaryng ought y-nough suffise.
Now herkneth, if yow likith for to heere;
But first I yow biseche in this matiere,
Though I by ordre telle not thise thinges,
Be it of popes, emperours, or kynges,
After her age, as men may write fynde,
But telle hem som bifore and som byhynde,
As it cometh now to my remembraunce,
Haveth me excused of myn ignoraunce.

---

less; by which means the importers, and they who took them at a low price to utter again, were suddenly, wrongfully, and beyond measure enriched; whilst they who were unable to distinguish the said money were cheated and impoverished, and the whole realm was fraudulently filled with those base coins. In 1347, the false lussheboures still continued to be brought into the kingdom in great quantities, and the Commons petitioned that the guilty might suffer the punishment of drawing and hanging. In 1348, it was again necessary to forbid the circulation of lussheburghs; and in 1351, the Statute of Purveyors was passed, which (cap. 11) declares what offences shall be adjudged treason, amongst which is this: if a man counterfeit the king's seal on his money, and if a man bring false money into the realm, counterfeit of the money of England, *as the money called lushburgh*, or other like to the said money of England, etc.

15467—I have ventured to emendate this line from the Lansd. MS. The Harl. MS. has, "And in metre eek, and in sondry wise", in which both sense and metre suffer.

THE MONKES TALE.

I wol by-waile, in maner of tregedye,
The harm of hem that stood in heigh degré,
And fallen so ther is no remedye
To bring hem out of her adversité ;
For certeynly, whan fortune lust to flee,
Ther may no man the cours of hir whiel holde ;
Let no man truste in blynd prosperité,
Beth war by these ensamples trewe and olde.

Lucifer.

At Lucifer, though he an aungil were,
And nought a man, at him wil I bygynne ;
For though fortune may non aungel dere,
From heigh degré yit fel he for his synne
Doun into helle, wher he yet is inne.
O Lucifer! brightest of aungels alle,
Now art thou Sathanas, that maist nought twynne
Out of miserie in which thou art falle.

Adam.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene

The Monkes Tale. This tale is evidently founded upon Boccaccio's celebrated work *De casibus virorum illustrium;* but Chaucer has introduced the several stories according to his own fancy, and has often taken them from other sources. They are not contained in the same order in all the manuscripts of Chaucer.

15482—*the cours of hir whiel holde.* Tyrwhitt has adopted a reading which is far less natural and expressive, in the language of Chaucer's age, "of hire the course withholde". The wheel of fortune is a well known emblem not only in medieval literature, but in medieval art.

15493—*Lo Adam.*—Adam comes first in the stories of Boccaccio. Lydgate, in his translation of Boccace, says of Adam and Eve,—

" Of slime of the erth in *Damascene the felde*
God made them above eche creature."

With Goddes oughne fynger wrought was he,
And nought bigeten of mannes sperma unclene,
And welt al paradys, savyng oon tre.
Had never worldly man suche degré
As Adam, til he for mysgovernance
Was dryven out of heigh prosperité,
To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce. 15500

Sampson.

Lo Sampson, whiche that was annunciate
By thangel, long er his nativité,
And was to God Almighty consecrate,
And stood in nobles whil that he might se.
Was never such another as was he,
To speke of strength, and therto hardynesse;
But to his wyfes tolde he his secré,
Thurgh which he slough himselfe for wrecchidnesse.
Sampson, this noble and myhty champioun,
Withouten wepen save his hondes tueye, 15510
He slowhe and al to-rent the lyoun
To-ward his weddynge walkinge be the waie.
The false wif couthe him plese and preie
Til sche his counseile knewe, and sche untrewe
Unto his foos his consel gan bewreye,
And him for-soke, and toke another newe.
Thre hundred foxis tok Sampson for ire,

15501—*Lo Sampson.* Chaucer appears to have taken the story of Samson directly from the book of Judges, which he quotes in express words a few lines further on.

15509—This stanza has been accidentally omitted in the Harl. MS, and is here inserted from the Lansd. MS. It represents the fourteenth chapter of the book of Judges.

And alle her tayles he togider bond;
And sette the foxes tailes alle on fuyre,
For he in every tail hath knyt a brond;
And thay brent alle the cornes of that lond,
And alle her olyvers and vynes eeke.
A thousand men he slough eek with his hond,
And hadde no wepen but an asses cheeke.
Whan thay were slayn, so thursted him that he
Was wel ner lorn, for which he gan to preye
That God wolde of his peyne have som pité,
And send him drynk, and elles most he deye.
And out of this asses cheke, that was so dreye,
Out of a woung toth sprong anon a welle,
Of which he dronk y-nough, schortly to seye;
Thus halp him God, as Judicum can telle.
By verray fors at Gasan, on a night,
Maugré the Philistiens of that cité,
The gates of the toun he hath up plight,
And on his bak caried hem hath he,
Heigh upon an hil, wher men might hem se.
O noble almighty Sampson, leef and deere,
Haddest thou nought to wommen told thy secré,
In al the world ne hadde be thy peere.
This Sampson neyther siser dronk ne wyn,
Ne on his heed com rasour noon ne schere,
By precept of the messager divyn,

15533—*at Gasan.* The Harl. MS. reads, by an evident mistake of the scribe, *of Algason.*

15541—*neyther siser. Sicera;* a general term for other intoxicating drinks than wine. The Lansd. MS. reads *sither.* Tyrwhitt has substituted *sider.*

For alle his strengthes in his heres were.
And fully twenty wynter, yer by yere,
He hadde of Israel the governaunce.
But soone he schal wepe many a teere,
For wymmen schuln him bringe to meschaunce.
Unto his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heres al his strengthe lay;
And falsly to his foomen sche him solde,
And slepyng in hir barm upon a day
Sche made to clippe or schere his heres away,
And made his foomen al his craft espien.
And whan thay fonde him in this array,
They bound him fast, and put out bothe his yen.
But er his heer clipped was or i-schave,
Ther was no bond with which men might him bynde;
But now is he in prisoun in a cave,
Ther as thay made him at the querne grynde.
O noble Sampson, strengest of al mankynde!
O whilom jugge in glory and in richesse!
Now maystow wepe with thine eyghen blynde,
Sith thou fro wele art falle to wrecchednesse?
Thend of this caytif was, as I schal say,
His foomen made a fest upon a day,
And made him as here fool biforn hem play;
And this was in a temple of gret array.
But atte last he made a foul affray;

15546—*Israel.* I have substituted this from the other manuscripts, in place of *Jerusalem*, which is the reading of the Harl. MS.

15560—*at the querne grynde. Et clausum in carcere molere fecerunt.* Jud. xvi, 21.

For he two pilers schook, and made hem falle,
And doun fel temple and al, and ther it lay,
And slough himsilf and eek his fomen alle ;
This is to sayn, the princes everichon ;
And eek thre thousand bodies were ther slayn,
With fallyng of the grete temple of stoon.
Of Sampson now wil I no more sayn ;
Be war by these ensamples, olde and playn,
That no man telle his counseil to his wyf,
Of such thing as he wold have secré fayn,
If that it touche his lymes or his lif.

De Ercule.

Of Ercules, the sovereyn conquerour,
Singen his werkes laude and heigh renoun ;

15581—*Of Ercules.* The account of the labours of Hercules is almost literally translated from *Boethius, De Consol. Philos.*, lib. iv, metr. 7, though he has changed the order of some of them.

Herculem duri celebrant labores ;
Ille Centauros domuit superbos ;
Abstulit sævo spolium leoni ;
Fixit et certis volucres sagittis ;
Poma cernenti rapuit draconi
Aureo læva gravior metallo ;
Cerberum traxit triplici catena ;
Victor immitem posuise fertur
Pabulum sævis dominum quadrigis ;
Hydra combusto periit veneno ;
Fronte turpatus Achelous amnis
Ora demersit pudibunda ripis ;
Stravit Antheum Libycis arenis ;
Cacus Evandri satiavit iras,
Quosque pressurus foret altus orbis
Setiger spumis humeros notavit.
Ultimus cœlum labor irreflexo
Sustulit collo, pretiumque rursus
Ultimi cœlum meruit laboris.

I restore the names from the Lansdowne MS., as they are very incorrectly written in the Harl. MS.

For in his tyme of strength he bar the flour.
He slough and rafte the skyn fro the leoun;
He of Centaures layde the bost adoun;
He Arpies slough, the cruel briddes felle;
The gold appul he raft fro the dragoun;
He drof out Cerbures the fend of helle;
He slough the cruel tyrant Buserus,
And made his hors to frete him fleisch and boon;
He slough the verray serpent veneneus;
Of Achiloyus tuo hornes he raft oon;
He slough Cacus in a cave of stoon;
He slough the geaunt Anteus the stronge;
He slough the grisly bore, and that anoon;
And bar the hevene upon his necke longe.
Was never wight, siththen the world bigan,
That slough so many monstres as dede he;
Thurghout the wide world his name ran,
What for his strengthe and for his bounté,
And every roialme went he for to se;
He was so strong, ther might no man him lette.

15588—*drof*, drew. The Land. MS. reads *drouhe*.

15595—*bore*. Substituted from the Land. MS. for *leoun*, the reading of the Harl. MS.

15596—*hevene*. I have retained Tyrwhitt's reading, which he found in other MSS., because it represents the Latin of Boethius, as quoted above, and which, in Chaucer's prose version of that writer, is translated thus, "And the last of his labors was, that he susteined the heven upon his necke unbowed." The Harl. and Lansd. MSS. read *the heed*, evidently supposing it refers to the head of the bore; the printed editions, with the same notion, read, "and bare his hed upon his spere louge."

—— *longe*. It may be observed that the final *e* marks the adverbial form of the word: it is not "upon his long neck," but "long upon his neck." One of the MSS. used by Tyrwhitt contains the Latin marginal gloss *diu*.

At bothe the worldes endes, as saith Trophé,
In stede of boundes he a piler sette.
A lemman hadde this noble campioun,
That highte Dejanire, freissh as May;
And as these clerkes maken mencioun,
Sche hath him sent a schurte fresch and gay.
Alas! this schirt, allas and wailaway!
Envenymed was subtily withalle,
That er he hadde wered it half a day,
It made his fleisch al fro his bones falle.
But natheles som clerkes hir excusen,
By oon that highte Nessus, that it makyd.
Be as be may, I wil nought hir accusyn;
But on his bak he wered this schirt al naked,
Til that his fleisch was for the venym blaked.
And whan he saugh noon other remedye,
In hote colis he hath himself i-raked;
For no venym deyned him to dye.
Thus starf this mighty and worthy Ercules.
Lo! who may truste fortune eny throwe?
For him that folweth al this world of pres,
Er he be war, is oft y-layd ful lowe.
Ful wys is he that can himselven knowe!
Be war, for whan that fortune lust to glose,
Than waytith sche hir man to overthrowe,
By suche way as he wolde lest suppose.

De rege Nabugodonosor.

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,

15603—*Trophé.* It is not clear to what writer Chaucer intended to refer under this name. In the margin of one of the Cambridge MSS., collated by Tyrwhitt, we find the gloss, *Ille vates Chaldæorum Tropheus.*

The glorious ceptre and real magesté,
That had the king Nabugodonosore,
With tonge unnethes may descryved be.
He twyes wan Jerusalem that cité;
The vessel out of the temple he with him ladde;
At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his delyt he ladde.
  The fairest children of the blood roial
Of Israel he dede gelde anoon,
And made ylk of hem to ben his thral;
Amonges othre Daniel was oon,
That was the wisest child of everychoon,
For he the dremes of the king expouned,
Ther as in Caldeyn was ther clerkes noon
That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned.
  This proude king let make a statu of gold,
Sixty cubites long and seven in brede,
To which ymage bothe yonge and olde
Comaunded he to love and have in drede,
Or in a fornays ful of flames rede
He schulde be brent that wolde not obeye.
But never wolde assente to that dede
Danyel ne his felawes tweye.
  This king of kinges preu was and elate;
He wende God that sit in magesté
Ne might him nought bireve of his estate.
But sodeynly he left his dignité,

15653—*preu was and elate.* I have added the conjunction from Tyrwhitt, who reads, *proud was and elate.*

I-lik a best him semed for to be,
And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute
In rayn, with wilde bestes walkyd he,
Til certein tyme was i-come aboute.
And lik an eglis fetheres were his heres,
His hondes like a briddes clowes were,
Til God relessed him a certeyn yeres,
And gaf him witte, and thanne with many a tere
He thanked God, and ever he is afere
To doon amys or more to trespace.
And er that tyme he layd was on bere,
He knew wel God was ful of might and grace.

Balthazar.

His sone, which that highte Balthazar,
That huld the regne after his fader day,
He by his fader couthe nought be war,
For proud he was of hert and of array;
And eek an ydolaster was he ay.
His heigh astate assured him in pryde;
But fortune cast him doun, and ther he lay,
And sodeynly his regne gan divide.
A fest he made unto his lordes alle
Upon a tyme, he made hem blithe be;
And than his officeres gan he calle,

15662—*hondes.* The Lansd. MS. reads *nayles*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

15665—*he is afere.* The Lansd. MS., which is followed by Tyrwhitt, reads,—

. . . and his life in fere
Was he to doon amys.

15669—*His sone.* This story and the preceding are taken from Daniel, i, 5; the latter only is given in Boccaccio.

" Goth, bringeth forth the vessealx," quod he,
" The which my fader in his prosperité
Out of the temple of Jerusalem byraft;
And to oure hihe goddis thanke we
Of honours that oure eldres with us laft!"
His wif, his lordes, and his concubines
Ay dronken, whiles her arriont last,
Out of this noble vesseals sondry wynes.
And on a wal this king his yhen cast,
And saugh an hond armles, that wroot fast;
For fere of which he quook and siked sore.
This hond, that Balthazar made so sore agast,
Wrot, *Mane, techel, phares*, and no more.
In al the lond magicien was noon
That couthe expounde what this lettre ment.
But Daniel expoundith it anoon,
And sayde, " King, God to thy fader sent
Glori and honour, regne, tresor, and rent;
And he was proud, and nothing God ne dredde,
And therfor God gret wreche upon him sent,
And him biraft the regne that he hadde.
" He was out cast of mannes compaignye,
With asses was his habitacioun,
And eete hay in wet and eek in drye,
Til that he knew by grace and by resoun
That God of heven had dominacioun
Over every regne and every creature;

15686—*arriont*. This is the reading of the Harl. MS.; it is a word which occurs nowhere else as far as I am aware, but I have not ventured to alter it. The Lansd. MS. reads *appetites*, which Tyrwhitt adopts.

And than had God of him compassioun,
And him restored to his regne and his figure.
"Eke thou that art his sone art proud also,
And knowest al this thing so verrayly,
And art rebel to God and art his fo;
Thou dronk eek of his vessel bodily,
Thy wyf eek and thy wenche sinfully
Dronke of the same vessel sondry wynes;
And heriest false goddes cursedly;
Therfore to the schapen ful gret pyne es.
"This hond was send fro God, that on the wal
Wrot, *Mane, techel, phares*, truste me.
Thy regne is doon, thou weyist nought at al;
Divided is thy regne, and it schal be
To Meedes and to Perses geven," quod he.
And thilke same night, the king was slawe,
And Darius occupied his degré,
Though therto neyther had he right ne lawe.
Lordyngs, ensample her-by may ye take,
How that in lordschip is no sikernesse;
For whan fortune wil a man for-sake,
Sche bereth away his regne and his richesse,
And eek his frendes bothe more and lesse.
And what man hath of frendes the fortune,
Mishap wil make hem enemyes, I gesse;
This proverbe is ful sothe and ful comune.

Zenobia.

Cenobia, of Palmire the queene,

15719—*weyist*. This reading is taken from the Lansd. MS. The Harl. MS. reads *wenist*.

15733—*Cenobia*. The story of Zenobia is taken chiefly from Boccaccio's work, *De claris mulieribus*.

As writen Perciens of hir noblesse,
So worthy was in armes and so keene,
That no wight passed hir in hardynesse,
Ne in lynage, ne in other gentilnesse.
Of the kinges blood of Pers sche is descendid;
I say that sche had not most fairnesse,
But of hir schap sche might not be amendid.
Fro hir childhod I fynde that sche fledde
Office of wommen, and to woode sche went,
And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde
With arwes brode that sche to hem sent;
Sche was so swyft, that sche anoon hem hent.
And whan that sche was elder, sche wolde kille
Leouns, lebardes, and beres al to-rent,
And in hir armes weld hem at hir wille,
Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seke,
And renne in the mounteyns al the night,
And slepe under a bussh; and sche couthe eeke
Wrastil by verray fors and verray might
With eny yong man, were he never so wight.
Ther mighte no thing in hir armes stonde.
Sche kept hir maydenhed from every wight;
To no man deyned hire to be bonde.
But atte last hir frendes han hir maried
To Odenake, prince of that citee,
Al were it so that sche him longe taried.
And ye schul understonde how that he
Had suche fantasies as hadde sche.
But natheles, whan thay were knyt in fere,
Thay lyved in joye and in felicité;

For ech of hem had other leef and deere.
Save oon thing, sche wolde never assent
By no way that he schulde by hir lye
But oones, for it was hir playn entent
To have a child the world to multiplie;
And also soone as sche might aspye
That sche was not with childe yit in dede,
Than wold sche suffre him doon his fantasie
Eftsones, and nought but oones, out of drede.
And if sche were with child at thilke cast,
No more schuld he playe thilke game
Til fully fourty dayes were y-past,
Than wold sche suffre him to do the same.
Al were this Odenake wilde or tame,
He gat no more of hir, for thus sche sayde,
Hit nas but wyves lecchery and schame,
In other caas if that men with hem playde.
Tuo sones by this Odenak had sche,
The which sche kept in vertu and lettrure.
But now unto our purpos torne we;
I say, so worschipful a creature,
And wys, worthy, and large with mesure,
So penyble in the werre and curteys eeke,
Ne more labour might in werre endure,
Was nowher noon in al this world to seeke.
Hir riche array, if it might be told,
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing,
Sche was al clothed in perré and gold;
And eek sche lafte nought for hir huntyng
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing;

Whan sche had leyser and might therto entent,
To lerne bookes was al hir likyng,
How sche in vertu might hir lif despent.
And schortly of this story for to trete,
So doughty was hir housbond and eek sche,
That thay conquered many regnes grete
In thorient, with many a fair citee
Appurtienant unto the magesté
Of Rome, and with strong hond hulden hem fast;
Ne never might her fomen doon hem fle
Ay while that Odenakes dayes last.
Her batails, who so lust hem for to rede,
Agayn Sapor the king and other mo,
And how that this processe fel in dede,
Why sche conquered, and what title had therto,
And after of hir meschief and hir woo,
How that sche was beseged and i-take,
Let hem unto my mayster Petrark go,
That writeth of this y-nough, I undertake.
Whan Odenake was deed, sche mightily
The regnes huld, and with hir propre hond
Ageins hir foos sche faught ful trewely,
That ther nas king ne prince in al that lond
That he nas glad if he that grace fond
That sche ne wold upon his lond werraye.
With hir thay made alliaunce by bond,

15810—*beseged*. This reading is adopted from the Lansd. MS., as best suited to the context. The Harl. MS. has *deceyved*.
15815—*trewely*. The MSS. I have examined agree in this word; Tyrwhitt reads *cruelly*.

To ben in peese, and let hir ryde and play.
The emperour of Rome, Claudius,
Ne him biforn the Romayn Galiene,
Ne dorste never be so corrageous,
Ne noon Ermine, ne Egipciene,
No Surrien, ne noon Arrabiene,
Withinne the feld that durste with hir fight,
Lest that sche wold hem with her hondes sleen,
Or with hir meyné putten hem to flight.
In kinges abyt went hir sones tuo,
As heires of her fadres regnes alle;
And Hermanno and Themaleo
Here names were, and Parciens men hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;
This mighty queene may no while endure,
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle
To wrecchednesse and to mysadventure.
Aurilian, whan that the governaunce
Of Rome cam into his hondes tway,
He schop him of this queen to do vengeaunce;
And with his legiouns he took the way
Toward Cenoby; and schortly to say
He made hir flee, and atte last hir hent,
And feterid hir, and eek hir children tweye,
And wan the lond, and home to Rome he went.
Amonges other thinges that he wan,
Hir chaar, that was with gold wrought and perré,
This grete Romayn, this Aurilian,

15832—*and Parciens men hem calle.* The Lansd. MS., and Tyrwhitt, read, *as Persians hem calle.*

Hath with him lad, for that men schulde se.
Bifore this triumphe walkith sche,
And gilte cheynes in hir necke hongynge ;
Corouned sche was, as aftir hir degré,
And ful of perré chargid hir clothyng.
Allas ! fortune ! sche that whilom was
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaulith al the pepul on hir, alas !
And sche that helmyd was in starke stoures,
And wan bifore tounes stronge and toures,
Schal on hir heed now were a wyntermyte ;
And sche that bar the cepter ful of floures,
Schal bere a distaf hirself for to quyte.

De Petro Hispanie rege.

O noble Petro, the glori of Spayne,

15855—*gaulith*, yelleth, howleth, shouteth. Tyrwhitt follows other MSS. in reading *gaureth*, shouteth.

15857—*bifore*. Other MSS. read, *by fors*.

15858—*wyntermyte*. This word, the exact meaning of which seems not to be known, is given differently in the MSS. *vitrymite*, *fitermyte*, *witermile*, *vitryte*, and in the old printed editions, *autremite ;* the latter of which is probably a mere error of the printers.

15860—*hirself*. Other MSS., followed by Tyrwhitt, read *hir cost*.

15861—*O noble Petro*. Tyrwhitt has adopted a different arrangement from some of the manuscripts, so as to place the histories more nearly in chronological order, by inserting after Zenobia, Nero, Holofernes, Antiochus, Alexander, Cæsar, and Cresus, and the monk's tale is made to end with the story of Hugolin of Pise. I retain, however, the arrangement of the Harl. MS., not only because I think it the best authority, but because I think this to be the order in which Chaucer intended to place them. The conclusion of the monk's tale, as it here stands, seems to be the natural one. When Chaucer wrote his grand work, the eventful history of Pedro the Cruel of Aragon was fresh in people's memories, and possessed a special interest in this country, from the part taken in the events connected with him by the Black Prince ; we can easily suppose the monk, who professes to disregard chronological order, wandering from the story of Zenobia, to some events of his own time, and then recalling other examples from antiquity. Tyrwhitt adopts from the

Whom fortune held so heigh in magesté,
Wel oughte men thy pitous deth complayne;
Thy bastard brother made the to fle,
And after at a sege by subtilté
Thow were bytrayed, and lad to his tent,
Wher as he with his oughne hond slough the,
Succedyng in thy lond and in thy rent.
The feld of snow, with thegle of blak ther-inne,
Caught with the leoun, reed coloured as is the gleede,
He brewede the cursednesse and synne,
The wikked nest werker of this neede.
Nought Oliver, ne Charles that ay took heede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armoryk
Geniloun Oliver, corruptid for mede,
Broughte this worthy king in such a bryk.

De Petro Cipre rege.

O worthy Petro king of Cipres, also,

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reading of other MSS., *O noble a worthy Petro, glorie of Spaine.* It may be observed, that the cause of Pedro, though he was no better than a cruel and reckless tyrant, was popular in England from the very circumstance that Prince Edward had embarked in it.

15864—Other MSS. read for this line, *Out of thy lond thy brother made the flee.*

15868—*lond.* The Lansd. MS. reads *regne*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt, and is perhaps the better reading.

15870—*leoun, reed coloured.* The Lansd. MS. reads, *lime rodde colours*, and Tyrwhitt has adopted *limerod coloured.* The armes here described are probably those of Dugueselin, who must be the person alluded to below as the Oliver of Armoryk, for it was notoriously Dugueselin who betrayed Pedro into his brother's tent, where he was slain.

15873—*Nought Oliver, ne Charles.* The Lansd. MS. reads, *Charles and Olyver*, and Tyrwhitt has *Not Charles Oliver*, which he explains, "Not the Oliver of Charles (Charlemagne), but an Oliver of Armorica, a second Guenelon."

15877—*Petro king of Cypres.* Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, who captured Alexandria in Egypt in 1365, an event before alluded to

That Alisaunder wan by heigh maistrye,
Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo,
Of which thin oughne lieges had envye;
And for no thing but for thy chivalrie,
Thay in thy bed han slayn the by the morwe.
Thus can fortune the whel governe and gye,
And out of joye bringe men into sorwe.

De Barnabo comite Mediolano.

Of Melayn grete Barnabo Viscount,
God of delyt and scourge of Lumbardye,
Why schuld thyn infortune I nought accounte,
Syn in astaat thou clombe were so hye;
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allie,
For he thy nevew was and sone in lawe,
Withinne his prisoun made the to dye;
But why ne how, not I, that thou were slawe.

De Hugilino comite Pise.

Of the erl Hugilin of Pise the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pité.
But litil out of Pise stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he;
And with him been his litil children thre,

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at the beginning of the *Canterbury Tales* (l. 51). This prince was assassinated in 1639.

15885—*Of Melayn grete Barnabo.* Bernabo Visconti, duke of Milan, was deposed by his nephew and thrown into prison, where he died in 1385. This tragedy must have occurred so recently when Chaucer wrote, that we do not wonder at his not knowing the circumstances of his death.

15886—*scourge.* I have adopted this reading from the Lansd. MS., in place of *strength*, given by the Harl. MS., which seems evidently incorrect.

15893—*Of the erl Hugilin.* The story of Hugilin of Pise had been told by Dante, in the *Inferno*, canto 33, whom Chaucer quotes directly as his authority.

Theldest skarsly fyf yer was of age;
Allas! fortune! it was gret cruelté
Suche briddes to put in such a cage.
Dampnyd he was to deye in that prisoun,
For Roger, which that bisschop was of Pise,
Had on him maad a fals suggestioun;
Thurgh which the peple gan on him arise,
And putte him in prisoun in such wise
As ye han herd, and mete and drynk he hadde
So smal that wel unnethe it may suffise,
And therwithal it was ful pore and badde.
And on a day bifel that in that hour
Whan that his mete was wont to be brought,
The gayler schet the dores of that tour.
He herd it wel, but he saugh it nought,
And in his hert anoon ther fel a thought
That thay for hungir wolde doon him dyen.
"Alas!" quod he, "allas! that I was wrought!"
Therwith the teeres felle fro his eyen.
His yongest sone, that thre yer was of age,
Unto him sayde, "Fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan wil the gayler bringen oure potage?
Is ther no morsel bred that ye doon kepe?
I am so hongry that I may not sleepe.
Now wolde God that I might slepe ever!
Than schuld not hunger in my wombe crepe.
Ther is no thing save bred that me were lever."
Thus day by day this child bigan to crie,
Til in his fadres barm adoun he lay,
And sayde, "Far wel, fader, I moot dye!"

And kist his fader, and dyde the same day.
And whan the woful fader deed it say,
For wo his armes tuo he gan to byte,
And sayde, " Fortune, alas and waylaway!
Thin false querel al my woo I wyte."
His childer wende that it for hongir was,
That he his armes gnew, and nought for wo,
And sayden, " Fader, do nought so, allas!
But rather et the fleisch upon us tuo.
Oure fleisch thou gave us, oure fleissh thou take us fro,
And ete y-nough;" right thus thay to him seyde.
And after that, withinne a day or tuo,
Thay layde hem in his lappe adoun and deyde.
Himself despeired eek for honger starf.
Thus ended is this mighty eorl of Pise;
For his estate fortune fro him carf.
Of this tregede it ought y-nough suffise;
Who so wil it hiere in lenger wise,
Rede the gret poet of Itaile
That highte Daunt, for he can it devise,
Fro poynt to poynt nought oon word wil he fayle.

De Nerone.

Although Nero were als vicious
As any fend that lith ful lowe adoun,
Yit he, as tellith us Swethoneus,
This wyde world had in subjeccioun,

15932—*querel.* The Lansd. MS. has *whele*, which is perhaps the better reading.

15949—*Although Nero.* Although Chaucer quotes Suetonius, his account of Nero is really taken from the *Romaun de la Rose*, and from *Boethius, de Consolat. Philos.*, lib. ii, met. 6.

Bothe est and west and septemtrioun.
Of rubies, safers, and of perles white,
Were alle his clothes embroudid up and doun;
For he in gemmis gretly gan delite.
More delycat, more pompous of array,
More proud was never emperour than he.
That ylke cloth that he had wered a day,
After that tyme he nolde it never se.
Nettis of gold thred had he gret plenté,
To fissche in Tyber, whan him lust to pleye.
His willes were as lawe in his degré,
For fortune as his frend wold him obeye.
He Rome brent for his delicacie;
The senatours he slough upon a day,
To here how men wolde wepe and crye;
And slough his brother, and by his suster lay.
His modir made he in pitous array,
For hire wombe slyt he, to by-holde
Wher he conceyved was, so waylaway!
That he so litel of his moodir tolde.

15953—*and septemtrioun.* This line stands as here printed in the Harl. and Lansd. MSS. Tyrwhitt inserts *south* (south and septemtrion), and observes: "The MSS. read *north*; but there can be no doubt of the propriety of the correction, which was made, I believe, in Ed. Urr. In the *Rom. de la R.*, from whence great part of this tragedy of Nero is translated, the passage stands thus, 6501.

Ce desloyal, que je te dy,
Et d'Orient et de *Midy*,
D'Occident, de Septentrion,
Tint-il la jurisdicion."

15963—*willes.* The Lansd. MS. has *lustes*, the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt. I am inclined to prefer the reading of the Harl. MS., which avoids the repetition of the word from the previous line.

15970—*hire wombe slyt he.* So the Harl. and Lansd. MSS.; Tyrwhitt reads, *he hire wombe let slitte.*

No teer out of his eyen for that sight
Ne came; but sayde, a fair womman was sche.
Gret wonder is that he couthe or might
Be domesman on hir dede beauté.
The wyn to bringen him comaundid he,
And drank anoon, noon other wo he made.
Whan might is torned unto cruelté,
Allas! to deepe wil the venym wade.
In youthe a maister had this emperour,
To teche him letterure and curtesye;
For of moralité he was the flour,
And in his tyme, but if bokes lye.
And whil his maister had of him maistrie,
He made him so connyng and so souple,
That long tyme it was or tyrannye
Or ony vice dorst on him uncouple.
This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
Bycause Nero had of him such drede,
For fro vices he wol him chastise
Discretly as by word, and nought by dede.
"Sir," wold he sayn, "an emperour mot needе
Be vertuous and hate tyrannye."
For which he in a bath made him to bleede

15976—*on hir dede beauté.* The word *dede*, omitted in the Harl. MS., is evidently necessary for the sense and measure. Chaucer is translating the words of Boethius, lib. ii, met. 6,—

"Ora non tinxit lacrymis, sed esse
Censor *extincti* potuit *decoris*";

which he has given thus in his prose version of Boethius, "Ne no tere wette his face, but he was so harde harted, that he might be domesman, or judge, of her *dedde beauté*". In both, *domesman* represents the Latin *censor*.

On bothe his armes, til he moste dye.
This Nero hadde eek a custumance
In youthe agein his maister for to ryse,
Which after-ward him thought a gret grevaunce;
Therfore he made him deye in this wise.
But natheles this Seneca the wise
Ches in a bath to deye in this manere,
Rather than to have another tormentise;
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister deere.
Now fel it so that fortune lust no lenger
The highe pride of Nero to cherice;
For though he were strong, yit was sche strenger,
Sche thoughte thus, "By God! I am to nyce,
To set a man that is ful sad of vice
In high degré, and emperour him calle;
By God! out of his sete I wil him trice;
Whan he lest weneth, sonnest schal byfalle.
The poeple ros on him upon a night
For heigh defaute, and whan he it aspyed,
Out of his dores anoon he hath him dight
Aloone, and ther he wende have ben allyed,
He knokked fast; and ay the more he cried,
The faster schette thay the dores alle.
Than wist he wel he had himself mysgyed,
And went his way, no lenger durst he calle.
The peple cried, and rumbled up and doun,

16003—*tormentise.* I have substituted this reading from Tyrwhitt, in place of that of the Harl. MS., *tyrannie.* The Lansd. MS. has *tormentrie.*

16009—*sad.* The Lansd. MS. reads *ful filled,* which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt.

That with his eris herd he how thay sayde,
" Her is this fals traitour, this Neroun ! "
For fere almost out of his witte he brayde,
And to his goddes pitously he prayde
For socour, but it mighte nought betyde ;
For drede of this him thoughte that he dyde,
And ran into a gardyn him to hyde.
And in this gardyn fond he cherlis twaye
Sittynge by a fuyr ful greet and reed.
And to these cherles tuo he gan to praye
To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,
That to his body, whan that he were deed,
Were no despyt y-doon for his defame.
Himself he slough, he couthe no better reed ;
Of which fortune thai lough and hadde game.

De Olipherno.

Was never capitaigne under a king,
That regnes mo put in subjeccioun,
Ne strenger was in feld of alle thing
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
Ne more pompous in heih presumpcioun,
Than Oliphern, which that fortune ay kist
So licorously, and ladde him up and doun,
Til that his heed was of, er he it wist.
Nought oonly that the world had of him awe,

16037—*Was never capitaigne.* This story is, of course, taken from the book of Judith. Tyrwhitt has committed a singular oversight in his note on line 16037,—" I cannot find any priest of this name (Eliachim) in the book of Judith. The high priest of Jerusalem is called Joachim in c. iv, which name would suit the verse better than Eliachim". In the vulgate Latin version of the book of Judith, which, of course, was the one used by Chaucer, the high priest's name is *Eliachim*.

For lesyng of riches and liberté,
But he made every man reneye his lawe ;
Nabugodonosor was lord, sayde he ;
Noon other god schuld honoured be.
Ageinst his heste dar no wight trespace,
Save in Betholia, a strong cité,
Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.
But tak keep of that dethe of Olipherne :
Amyd his ost he dronke lay on night
Withinne his tente, large as is a berne,
And yit, for all his pomp and al his might,
Judith, a womman, as he lay upright,
Slepying, his heed of smot, and fro his tent
Ful prively sche stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto hir toun sche went.

De rege Antiochie illustri.

What needith it of king Antiochius,
To telle his heye real magesté,
His heyhe pride, his werke venemous ?
For such another was ther noon as he.
Redeth which that he was in Machabé,
And redith the proude wordes that he sayde,
And why he fel fro his prosperité,
And in an hil how wrecchidly he deyde.
Fortune him hath enhaunced so in pryde,
That verraily he wend he might atteyne

16061—*king Antiochius*. This story is taken from 2 Maccabees, c. ix.
16070—*atteyne*. 16057—*weyen ech mounteyne*. I have not hesitated in correcting the Harl. MS. in this instance by others; the former reads, by an evident error of the scribe, *have teyned* and *weyen whet ech mounteyned*.

Unto the sterris upon every syde;
And in a balaunce weyen ech mounteyne;
And alle the floodes of the see restreyne.
And Goddes peple had he most in hate;
Hem wold he slee in torment and in peyne,
Wenyng that God ne might his pride abate.
And for that Nichanor and Thimothé
With Jewes were venquist mightily,
Unto the Jewes such an hate had he,
That he bad graithe his chaar hastily,
And swor, and sayde ful despitously,
Unto Jerusalem he wold eftsoone,
To wreke his ire on it full cruelly;
But of his purpos he was let ful soone.
God, for his manace, him so sore smoot
With invisible wounde incurable,
That in his guttes carf it so and bot,
That his peynes were importable.
And certeynly the wreche was resonable;
For many a mannes guttes dede he peyne;
But fro his purpos cursed and dampnable,
For al his smert, he nolde him nought restreyne.
But bad anoon apparailen his host,
And sodeynly, er he was of it ware,
God daunted al his pride and al his bost
For he so sore fel out of his chare,
That it his lymes and his skyn to-tare,
So that he nomore might go ne ryde;
But in a chare men aboute him bare
Al for-brosed, bothe bak and syde.

The wreche of God him smot so cruely,
That in his body wicked wormes crept,
And therwithal he stonk so orribly,
That noon of al his meyné that him kepte,
Whether that he wook or elles slepte,
Ne mighte nought the stynk of him endure.
In this meschief he weyled and eek wepte,
And knew God lord of every creature.
To al his host and to himself also
Ful wlatsom was the stynk of his carayne;
No man ne might him bere to ne fro;
And in his stynk and his orrible payne
He starf ful wrecchedly in a mountayne.
Thus hath this robbour and this homicide,
That many a man made wepe and playne,
Such guerdoun as that longeth unto pryde.

De Alexandro Magno, Philippi regis Macedonie filio.

The story of Alisaunder is so comune,
That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd som-what or al of this fortune;
Thys wyde world as in conclusioun
He wan by strengthe, or for his heigh renoun,
Thay were glad for pees unto him sende.
The pride of man and bost he layd adoun,
Wher so he cam, unto the worldes ende.
Comparisoun yit mighte never be maked
Bitwen him and noon other conquerour;
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked.
He was of knyghthod and of fredam flour;
Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;

Save wyn and wymmen, no thing might aswage
His heigh entent in armes and labour,
So was he ful of leonyne corage.
What pité were it to him, though I yow tolde
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo
Of kynges, princes, dukes, and eorles bolde,
Which he conquered and brought unto wo?
I say, as fer as men may ryde or go,
The world was his, what schold I more devyse?
For though I write or tolde you evermo,
Of his knighthood it mighte nought suffise.
Twelf yer he regned, as saith Machabé;
Philippes son of Macedon he was,
That first was king in Grece that contré.
O worthy gentil Alisaundre, alas!
That ever schulde falle such a caas!
Empoysoned of thin oughne folk thou were;
Thyn sis fortune is torned into an aas,
And right for the ne wepte sche never a teere
Who schal me give teeres to compleigne
The deth of gentiles and of fraunchise,
That al the worlde had in his demeigne;
And yit him thought it mighte nought suffice,
So ful was his corage of high emprise.
Allas! who schal helpe me to endite
Fals infortune, and poysoun to devyse,
The whiche two of al this wo I wyte.

16132—*leonyne*. I have adopted this reading from Tyrwhitt. That of the Harl. MS., *lumyne*, seems to make no sense, and the reading of the Lansd. MS., *loveinge*, is no better.

Julius Cesar.

By wisedom, manhod, and by gret labour,
Fro humblehede to royal magesté
Up roos he, Julius the conquerour,
That wan al thoccident by land and see,
By strengthe of hond or elles by treté,
And unto Rome made hem contributarie,
And siththe of Rome themperour was he,
Til that fortune wax his adversarie.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalie
Agains Pompeus, fader thin in lawe,
That of the orient had al the chivalrie,
Als fer as that the day bigynnes to dawe,
Thorugh thi knighthod thou hast him take and slawe,
Save fewe folk that with Pompeus fledde;
Thurgh which thou puttist al thorient in awe;
Thanke fortune that so wel the spedde.

But now a litel while I wil bywaile
This Pompeus, the noble governour
Of Rome, which that flowe fro this bataile;
Alas! I say, oon of his men, a fals traitour,
His heed of smoot, to wynne his favour
Of Julius, and him the heed he brought.
Alas! Pompeus, of the orient conquerour,
That fortune to such a fyn the brought.

To Rome agayn repaireth Julius,
With his triumphe laurial ful hye.
But on a tyme Brutus and Cassius,
That ever had to his estat envye,
Ful prively hath made conspiracie

Agains this Julius in subtil wise;
And cast the place in which he schulde dye
With boydekyns, as I schal yow devyse.
This Julius to the capitoile went
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon;
And in the capitoil anoon him hent
This false Brutus, and his other foon,
And stiked him with boydekyns anoon
With many a wounde, and thus thay let him lye.
But never gront he at no strook but oon,
Or elles at tuo, but if the storie lye.
So manly was this Julius of hert,
And so wel loved estatly honesté,
That though his deedly woundes sore smert,
His mantil over his hipes caste he,
For no man schulde seen his priveté.
And as he lay deyinge in a traunce,
And wiste wel that verrayly deed was he,
Of honesté yet had he remembraunce.
Lucan, to the this story I recomende,
And to Swetoun and to Valirius also,
That al the story writen word and ende,
How to these grete conqueroures tuo
Fortune was first frend and siththen fo.
No man trust upon hir favour longe,
But have hir in awayt for evermo,
Witnesse on alle thise conqueroures stronge.

Cresus.

This riche Cresus, whilom king of Lyde,

16213—*Cresus.* The Harl. MS. has *Gresus* all through, which I

Of which Cresus Cirus him sore dradde,
Yet was he caught amyddes al his pride,
And to the fuyr to brenne him men him ladde.
But such a rayn doun fro the heven schadde,
That slough the fuyr and made him to eschape.
But to be war yet grace noon he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.

Whan he was eschaped, he couth nought stent
For to bygynne a newe werre agayn;
He wende wel, for that fortune him sent
Such hap that he eschaped thurgh the rayn,
That of his foos he mighte not be slayn.
And eek a sweven upon a night he mette,
Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn,
That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette.

Upon a tree he was set, as him thought,
Wher Jubiter him wissch bothe bak and side,
And Phebus eek a fair towail him brought
To drye him with, and therfore wax his pride;
And to his doughter that stood him biside,
Which that he knew in heigh science abounde,
And bad hire telle what it signifyde,
And sche his dreem right thus gan expounde.

"The tree," quod sche, "the galwes is to mene,
And Jubiter betokenith snow and rayn,

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have not thought it necessary to retain. Tyrwhitt observes that,—"In the opening of this story, our author has plainly copied the following passage of his own version of Boethius, B. ii, Pro. 2: 'Wiste thou not how Cresus, king of Lydiens, *of whiche king Cyrus was ful sore agaste* a litel before, etc'. But the greatest part is taken from the *Rom. de la Rose*, ver. 6847—6912".

16217—*heven*. The Lansd. MS. has *walkyn*, and Tyrwhitt *welken*.

And Phebus with his towail so clene,
Tho ben the sonne stremes, soth to sayn.
Thow schalt enhangid ben, fader, certayn;
Rayn shal the wasch, and sonne schal the drye."
Thus warned sche him ful plat and ek ful playn,
His doughter, which that called was Phanie.
And hanged was Cresus this proude king,
His real trone might him not availe.
Tregedis, ne noon other maner thing,
Ne can I synge, crie, ny biwayle,
But for that fortune wil alway assayle
With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude;
For whan men trusteth hir, than wil sche faile,
And cover hir brighte face with a clowde.

THE PROLOGE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.

"Ho, sire!" quod the knight, "no more of this;
That ye han said is right y-nough y-wys,
And mochil mor; for litel hevynesse
Is right i-nough for moche folk, I gesse.
I say for me, it is a gret disease,
Wher as men han ben in gret welthe and ease,
To hieren of her sodeyn fal, allas!

16247—*Tregedis.* These two lines are given differently in Tyrwhitt, and perhaps better, as follows:—

"Tragedie is non other maner thing,
Ne can in singing crien ne bewaile".

And he observes, "This reflection seems to have been suggested by one which follows soon after the mention of Crœsus in the passage just cited from Boethius. 'What other thing bewaylen the cryinges of tragedyes but onely the dedes of fortune, that with an aukewarde stroke overtourneth the realmes of grete nobleye?'"

And the contraire is joye and gret solas;
As whan a man hath ben in pore estate,
And clymbith up, and wexeth fortunate,
And ther abydeth in prosperité;
Such thing is gladsom, and it thinkith me,
And of such thing were goodly for to telle."
"Ye," quod oure host, "by seint Paules belle,
Ye say right soth; this monk hath clappid lowde;
He spak, how fortune was clipped with a clowde
I not never what, and als of tregedie
Right now ye herd; and pardy! no remedye
It is for to bywayle or compleyne
That that is doon; and also it is a peyne,
As ye han said, to hiere of hevynesse.
Sire monk, no more of this, so God yow blesse;
Your tale anoyeth al this compaignie;
Such talkyng is nought worth a boterflye,
For therinne is noon disport ne game.
Wherfor, sir monk, damp Pieres by your name,
I pray yow hertly, tel us somwhat ellis,
For sicurly, ner gingling of the bellis
That on your bridil hong on every syde,
By heven king, that for us alle dyde,
I schold er this han falle doun for sleep,
Although the slough had never ben so deep;
Than had your tale have be told in vayn.

16268—*was clipped.* The Lansd. MS. reads *covered was;* which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

16280—*gingling.* The Lands. MS. reads *clynkeing*, the reading which Tyrwhitt adopts. Compare, however, the Prologue, l. 170, and the note.

For certeynly, as these clerkes sayn,
Wher as a man may have noon audience,
Nought helpith it to tellen his sentence.
And wel I wot the substance is in me,
If eny thing schal wel reported be.
Sir, say somwhat of huntyng, I yow pray."
"Nay," quod the monk, "I have no lust to play;
Now let another telle, as I have told."
Then spak our ost with rude speche and bold,
And said unto the nonnes prest anoon,
"Com ner, thou prest, com ner, thou sir Johan,
Tel us such thing as may our hertes glade;
Be blithe, although thou ryde upon a jade.
What though thin hors be bothe foul and lene?
If he wil serve the, rek not a bene;
Lok that thin hert be mery evermo."
"Yis, sire, yis, hoste," quod he, "so mot I go,
But I be mery, i-wis I wol be blamed."
And right anoon he hath his tale tamyd;
And thus he sayd unto us everichoon,
This sweete prest, this goodly man sir Johan.

THE NONNE PREST HIS TALE.

A POORE wydow, somdel stope in age,
Was whilom duellyng in a pore cotage,

The nonne prest his tale. This tale was taken from the fifth chapter of the old French metrical *Roman de Renart*, entitled, *Si comme Renart prist Chantecler le coc* (ed. Meon, tom. i, p. 49). The same story forms one of the fables of Marie of France, where it stands as fab. 51, *Dou coc et dou werpil*: see Roquefort's edition of the works of Marie, tom. ii, p. 240.

Bisyde a grove, stondyng in a dale.
This wydowe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Syn thilke day that sche was last a wif,
In paciens ladde a ful symple lyf.
For litel was hir catel and hir rent;
For housbondry of such as God hir sent,
Sche fond hirself, and eek hir doughtres tuo.
Thre large sowes had sche, and no mo,
Thre kyn, and eek a scheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which sche eet ful many a sclender meel.
Of poynaunt saws hir needid never a deel.
Noon deynteth morsel passid thorugh hir throte;
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never sik:
Attempre dyete was al hir phisik,
And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir nothing for to daunce,
Ne poplexie schente not hir heed.
No wyn ne drank sche, nother whit ne reed:
Hir bord was servyd most with whit and blak,
Milk and broun bred, in which sche fond no lak,
Saynd bacoun, and som tyme an ey or tweye;
For sche was as it were a maner deye.
A yerd sche had, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,
In which sche had a cok, hight Chaunteclere,
In al the lond of crowyng was noon his peere.
His vois was merier than the mery orgon,
On masse dayes that in the chirche goon;

Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge,
Than is a clok, or an abbay orologge.
By nature knew he ech ascencioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fyftene were ascendid,
Thanne crewe he, it might not ben amendid.
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batayld, as it were a castel wal.
His bile was blak, and as the geet it schon;
Lik asur were his legges and his ton;
His nayles whitter than the lily flour,
And lik the burnischt gold was his colour.
This gentil cok had in his governaunce
Seven hennes, for to do al his plesaunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramoures,
And wonder lik to him, as of coloures.
Of whiche the fairest hiewed on hir throte,
Was cleped fayre damysel Pertilote.
Curteys sche was, discret, and debonaire,
And companable, and bar hirself ful faire,
Syn thilke day that sche was seven night old,
That sche hath trewely the hert in hold
Of Chaunteclere loken in every lith:
He loved hir so, that wel him was therwith.
But such a joye was it to here him synge,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, "my liefe is faren on londe."
Fro thilke tyme, as I have understonde,

16359—*seven night.* I adopt this reading from the Lansd. MS.; the reading of the Harl. MS. *seven yer*, is certainly wrong.

Bestis and briddes cowde speke and synge.
And so byfel, that in a dawenynge,
As Chaunteclere among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in his halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecler gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.
And whan that Pertelot thus herd him rore,
Sche was agast, and sayde, "herte deere,
What eylith yow to grone in this manere?
Ye ben a verray sleper, fy for schame!"
And he answerd and sayde thus, "Madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nought agreef:
By God, me mette I was in such meschief
Right now, that yit myn hert is sore afright.
Now God," quod he, "my sweven rede aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne oure yerd, wher as I saugh a beest,
Was lik an hound, and wold have maad arrest
Upon my body, and wold han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yolow and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eeres
With blak, unlik the remenaunt of his heres.
His snowt was smal, with glowyng yen tweye:
Yet of his look for fer almost I deye:
This caused me my gronyng douteles."
"Away!" quod sche, "fy on yow, herteles!
Allas!" quod sche, "for, by that God above!
Now have ye lost myn hert and al my love;

I can nought love a coward, by my feith.
For certis, what so eny womman seith,
We alle desiren, if it mighte be,
To have housbondes, hardy, riche, and fre,
And secré, and no nygard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avaunter, by that God above!
How dorst ye sayn for schame unto your love,
That any thing might make yow afferd?
Have ye no mannes hert, and han a berd?
Allas! and can ye ben agast of swevenys?
Nought, God wot, but vanité, in sweven is.
Swevens engendrid ben of repleccioun̄s,
And often of fume, and of complexioun̄s,
Whan humours ben to abundaunt in a wight.
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
Cometh of the grete superfluité
Of youre reede *colera*, pardé,
Which causeth folk to dremen in here dremes
Of arwes, and of fuyr with reede beemes,
Of rede bestis, that thai wil him byte,
Of contek, and of whelpis greet and lite;
Right as the humour of malencolie
Causeth, in sleep, ful many a man to crye,
For fere of beres, or of boles blake,
Or elles blake develes wol hem take.
Of other humours couthe I telle also,
That wirken many a man in slep ful woo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo Catoun, which that was so wis a man,

16426—*Lo Catoun.* *Cato de Moribus*, l. ii, dist. 32, *Somnia ne cures.*

Sayde he nought thus, ne do no force of dremes?
Now, sire," quod sche, "whan we fle fro thise beemes,
For Goddis love, as tak som laxatyf:
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counsel yow the best, I wol not lye,
That bothe of coloure, and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye schol nought tarye,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I schal myself tuo herbes techyn yow,
That schal be for your hele, and for youre prow;
And in oure yerd tho herbes schal I fynde,
The whiche han of her propreté by kynde
To purgen yow bynethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for Goddis oughne love!
Ye ben ful colerik of complexioun;
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynd yow not replet in humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel lay a grote,
That ye schul have a fever terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or tuo ye schul have digestives
Of wormes, or ye take your laxatives,
Of lauriol, century, and fumytere,
Or elles of elder bery, that growith there,
Of catapus, or of gaytre beriis,

" I observe, by the way, that this distich is quoted by John of Salisbury, *Polycrat.* l. ii, c. 16, as a precept *viri sapientis*. In another place, l. vii, c. 9, he introduces his quotation of the first verse of dist. 20, l. iii, in this manner. Ait *vel Cato, vel alius*, nam autor incertus est".—*Tyrwhitt.*

16432-3—These two lines, omitted in the Harl. MS. by an oversight of the scribe, are here inscribed from the Lansd. MS.

16450—*elder bery*. This is the reading of the Harl. MS. The Lansd. MS. has *elobore*, and Tyrwhitt *elleber*.

Of erbe yve that groweth in our yerd, ther mery is:
Pike hem up right as thay growe, and et hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kyn;
Dredith non dremes; I can say no more."
"Madame," quod he, "*graunt mercy* of your lore.
But natheles, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a gret renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bookes rede
Of many a man, more of auctorité
Than ever Catoun was, so mot I the,
That al the revers sayn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns
As wel of joye, as of tribulaciouns,
That folk enduren in this lif present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve schewith it in dede.
Oon of the grettest auctours that men rede,
Saith thus, that whilom tway felawes wente
On pylgrimage in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay com into a toun,
Wher as ther was such congregacioun
Of poeple, and eek so streyt of herbergage,
That thay fond nought as moche as oon cotage,

16470—*Oon of the grettest auctours.* "Cicero, *de Divin.* l. i, c. 27, relates this and the following story; but in a contrary order; and with so many other differences, that one might be led to suspect that he was here quoted at second hand, if it were not usual with Chaucer, in these stories of familiar life, to throw in a number of natural circumstances, not to be found in his original authors."—*Tyrwhitt.*

In which that thay might bothe i-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten of necessité,
As for that night, depart her compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his loggyng as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was loggid in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his adventure, or his fortune,
That us governith alle in comune.
And so bifel, that, long er it were day,
This oon met in his bed, ther as he lay,
How that his felaw gan upon him calle,
And sayd, 'allas! for in an oxe stalle
This night I schal be murdrid ther I lye.
Now help me, deere brother, or I dye;
In alle haste cum to me,' he sayde.
This man out of his slep for fer abrayde;
But whan that he was waked out of his sleep,
He torned him, and took of this no keep;
Him thought his dreem nas but a vanité.
Thus twies in his sleepe dremed he.
And at the thridde tyme yet his felawe
Com, as him thought, and sayd, 'I am now slawe:
Bihold my bloody woundes, deep and wyde.
Arise up erly in the morwe tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A cart of donge there schalt thou see,
In which my body is hyd prively.
Do thilke cart arresten boldely.

My gold caused my mourdre, soth to sayn.'
And told him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe.
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxe stalle,
After his felaw he bigan to calle.
The hostiller answered him anoon,
And sayde, 'Sire, your felaw is agoon,
Als soone as day he went out of the toun.'
This man gan falle in a suspeccioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wold he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong cart went as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wise
As ye han herd the deede man devise;
And with an hardy hert he gan to crie
Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye.
'My felaw mordrid is this same night,
And in this carte he lith heer upright.
I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
'That schulde kepe and reule this cité;
Harrow! allas! her lith my felaw slayn!'
What schold I more unto this tale sayn?
The peple upstert, and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the middes of the dong thay founde

16528—*heer upright.* The Lansd. MS. reads *gaping upright*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt.

The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
O blisful God, thou art ful just and trewe,
Lo, how thow bywreyest mordre alday.
Mordre wil out, certes it is no nay.
Morder is so wlatsom and abhominable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wold nought suffre it hiled be;
Though it abyde a yeer, or tuo, or thre,
Morder wil out, this is my conclusioun.
And right anoon, the mynistres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,
And eek the hostiller so sore engyned,
That thay biknew her wikkednes anoon,
And were anhonged by the nekke boon.
"Here may men se that dremys ben to drede.
And certes in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe nought, so have I joye or blis),
Tuo men that wolde have passed over see
For certeyn causes into fer contré,
If that the wynd ne hadde ben contrarie,
That made hem in a cité for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven syde.
But on a day, agayn the even tyde,
The wynd gan chaunge, and blew right as hem list.
Jolyf and glad they wenten unto rest,
And casten hem ful erly for to sayle;
But to that oon man fell a gret mervayle.
That oon of hem in his slepyng as he lay,
Him met a wonder drem, agayn the day;

Him thought a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaunded, that he schuld abyde,
And sayd him thus, 'if thou to morwe wende,
Thow schalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.'
He wook, and told his felaw what he mette,
And prayde him his viage to lette,
As for that day, he prayd him for to abyde.
His felaw that lay by his beddis syde,
Gan for to lawgh, and scorned him ful fast.
'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte gaste,
That I wil lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dremynges,
For swevens been but vanitees and japes.
Men dreme al day of owles and of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal;
Men dreme of thinges that never be schal.
But sith I see that thou wilt her abyde,
And thus forslouthe wilfully thy tyde,
God wot it reweth me, and have good day.'
And thus he took his leve, and went his way.
But er he hadde half his cours i-sayled,
Noot I nought why, ne what meschaunce it ayled,
But casuelly the schippes bothom rent,
And schip and man under the watir went
In sight of other schippes ther byside,
That with him sailed at the same tyde.

"And therfore, faire Pertelot so deere,
By such ensamples olde maistow leere

16580—*never be schal.* I have not ventured to change the reading of the Harl. MS. Tyrwhitt reads, *never was ne shall.*

That no man scholde be to recheles
Of dremes, for I say the douteles,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lif of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenilm mette a thing.
A litil or he was mordred upon a day,
His mordre in his avysioun he say.
His norice him expouned every del
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun; but he nas but seven yer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of eny drem, so holy was his hert.
By God, I hadde lever than my schert,
That ye had rad his legend, as have I.
Dame Pertelot, I say yow trewely,
Macrobius, that writ the avisioun
In Auffrik of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and saith that thay been
Warnyng of thinges that men after seen.
And forthermore, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde Testament, of Daniel,
If he huld dremes eny vanyté.
Rede eek of Joseph, and ther schal ye see
Whethir dremes ben som tyme (I say nought alle)

16596—*Kenelm.* Kenelm succeeded his father, Kenulph, on the throne of the Mercians, in 821, at the age of seven years, and was murdered by order of his aunt, Quenedreda. He was subsequently made a saint, and his legend will be found in *Capgrave*, or in the *Golden Legend*.

16610—*Cipioun.* The *Somnium Scipionis* of Macrobius was a favourite work during the middle ages.

Warnyng of thinges that schul after falle.
Lok of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His baker and his botiler also,
Whethir thay felte noon effect in dremis.
Who so wol seke actes of sondry remys,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lydes king,
Mette he not that he sat upon a tre,
Which signified he schuld hanged be?
Lo hir Andromachia, Ectors wif,
That day that Ector schulde lese his lif,
Sche dremed on the same night byforn,
How that the lif of Ector schuld be lorn,
If thilke day he wente to batayle;
Sche warned him, but it might nought availe;
He wente forth to fighte natheles,
And he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is neigh day, I may not duelle.
Schortly I say, as for conclusioun,
That I schal have of this avisioun
Adversité; and I say forthermore,
That I ne telle of laxatifs no store,
For thay ben venemous, I wot it wel;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.
Now let us speke of mirthe, and lete al this;
Madame Pertilot, so have I blis,

16627—*Lo hir Andromachia.* Andromache's dream is related in the twenty-fourth chapter of *Dares Phrygius:* the authority for the history of the Trojan war, most popular in the middle ages.

Of o thing God hath me sent large grace;
For whan I se the beauté of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet hiew about your eyghen,
It makith al my drede for to deyghen,
For, al so siker as *In principio,*
Mulier est hominis confusio. 16650
(Madame, the sentence of this Latyn is,
Womman is mannes joye and mannes blis.)
For whan I fiele a-night your softe syde,
Al be it that I may not on you ryde,
For that your perche is mad so narow, allas!
I am so ful of joye and solas,
That I defye bothe sweven and drem."
And with that word he fleigh doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle, 16660
For he had found a corn, lay in the yerd.
Real he was, he was nomore aferd;
He fetherid Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was prime.
He lokith as it were a grim lioun;
And on his toon he rometh up and doun,
Him deyned not to set his foot to grounde.
He chukkith, whan he hath a corn i-founde,
And to him rennen than his wifes alle.
Thus real, as a prince is in his halle, 16670
Leve I this Chaunteclere in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure.
Whan that the moneth in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan God maked first man,

Was complet, and y-passed were also,
Syn March bygan, tway monthes and dayes tuo,
Byfel that Chaunteclere in al his pride,
His seven wyves walkyng by his syde,
Cast up his eyghen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus had i-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more:
He knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
That it was prime, and crew with blisful steven.
"The sonne," he sayde, "is clomben up on heven
Twenty degrees and oon, and more i-wis.
Madame Pertelot, my worldes blis,
Herknith these blisful briddes how thay synge,
And seth these freissche floures how thay springe;
Ful is myn hert of revel and solaas."
But sodeinly him fel a sorwful caas;
For ever the latter end of joye is wo.

16676—*Syn March bygan, tway monthes and dayes tuo.* This is the reading of the Harleian MS., and I see no reason to change it. Tyrwhitt reads *Sithen March ended, thritty dayes and two*, and observes, "I have ventured to depart from the MSS. and Edit. in this passage. They all read *began* instead of *ended*. At the same time MS. c. 1, has this note in the margin, 'i. 2° die Maii,' which plainly supposes that the thirty-two days are to be reckoned from the end of March. As the vernal equinox (according to our author's hypothesis, Discourse, &c., p. 163) happened on the 12th of March, the place of the sun (as described in ver. 15200, l.) in 22° of Taurus agrees very nearly with his true place on the second of May, the fifty-third day incl. from the equinox. MS. C. reads thus,—

"Syn March began tway monthes and dayes two;

which brings us to the same day, but, I think, by a less probable correction of the faulty copies."

16685—*Twenty degrees.* "The reading of the greatest part of the MSS. is *fourty degrees*. But this is evidently wrong; for Chaucer is speaking of the altitude of the sun at, or about, prime, i.e., six o'clock, A.M. See ver. 15203. When the sun is in 22° of Taurus, he is 21° high about three-quarters after six, A.M."—*Tyrwhitt.*

God wot that worldly joye is soone ago;
And if a rethor couthe faire endite,
He in a chronique saufly might he write,
As for a soverayn notabilité.
Now every wys man let him herkne me:
This story is al so trewe, I undertake,
As the book is of Launcelot the Lake,
That womman huld in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
A cole-fox, ful sleigh of iniquité,
That in the grove had woned yeres thre,
By heigh ymaginacioun forncast,
The same nighte thurgh the hegge brast
Into the yerd, ther Chaunteclere the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern of the day,
Waytyng his tyme on Chaunteclere to falle;
As gladly doon these homicides alle,
That in awayte lyn to morther men.
O false mordrer lurckyng in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
Fals dissimulour, o Greke Sinon,
That broughtest Troye al utrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecler, accursed be the morwe,
That thou into the yerd flough fro the bemys!
Thow were ful wel warned be thy dremys,

16700 16710

16712—*lurckyng*. The Lansd. MS. reads *roukeing*, and Tyrwhitt has *rucking*.

That thilke day was perilous to the.
But what that God forwot most needes be,
After the opynyoun of certeyn clerkis.
Witnesse on him, that eny parfit clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercacioun
In this matier, and gret disputesoun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousend men.
But yit I can not bult it to the bren,
As can the holy doctor Augustyn,
Or Boece, or the bischop Bradwardyn,
Whether that Goddis worthy forwetyng
Streigneth me needely for to do a thing,
(Needely clepe I simple necessité);
Or elles if fre choys be graunted me
To do that same thing, or to do it nought,
Though God forwot it, er that it was wrought;
Or of his wityng streyneth never a deel,
But by necessité condicionel.
I wol not have to do of such matiere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye schal hiere,
That took his counseil of his wyf with sorwe
To walken in the yerd upon the morwe,
That he had met the dreme, that I tolde.
Wymmens counseiles ben ful ofte colde;
Wommannes counseil brought us first to woo,
And made Adam fro paradys to go,
Ther as he was ful mery, and wel at ease.
But for I not, to him it might displease,
If I counseil of womman wolde blame,
Pas over, for I sayd it in my game.

Red auctours, wher thay trete of such matiere,
And what thay sayn of wommen ye may heere.
These been the cokkes wordes, and not myne;
I can noon harme of womman divine.
Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
Lith Pertelot, and alle hir sustres by,
Agayn the sonne; and Chaunteclere so free
Sang merier than the meremayd in the see;
For Phisiologus seith sicurly,
How that thay syngen wel and merily.
And so byfel that as he cast his ye
Among the wortes on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
No thing ne list him thanne for to crowe,
But cryde anon, "cok, cok," and up he stert,
As man that was affrayed in his hert.
For naturelly a beest desireth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never er had sayn it with his ye.
This Chaunteclere, whan he gan it aspye,
He wold han fled, but that the fox anon
Said, "gentil sire, allas! why wol ye goon?
Be ye affrayd of me that am youre frend?

16757—*Phisiologus.* This was the title given to a popular metrical Latin treatise on the natures of animals, in the middle ages, and is frequently quoted by the early writers when alluding to subjects of natural history. The chapter *de Sirenis* begins thus,—

"Sirenæ sunt monstra maris resonantia magnis
Vocibus et modulis cantus formantia multis,
Ad quas incaute veniunt sæpissime nautæ,
Quæ faciunt somnum nimia dulcedine vocum."

16770—*why wol ye goon?* Tyrwhitt follows the reading of some of the other MSS., and prints it, *what wol ye don?*

Certes, I were worse than eny feend,
If I to yow wold harm or vilonye.
I am nought come your counsail to espye.
But trewely the cause of my coming
Was only for to herken how ye sing.
For trewely ye have als mery a steven,
As eny aungel hath, that is in heven;
Therwith he han of musik more felynge,
Than had Boece, or eny that can synge.
My lord your fader (God his soule blesse)
And youre moder of her gentilesse
Han in myn hous been, to my gret ease;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wold I yow please.
But for men speke of syngyng, I wol say,
So mot I brouke wel myn yen tway,
Save ye, I herde never man so synge,
As dede your fadir in the morwenynge.
Certes it was of hert al that he song.
And for to make his vois the more strong,
He wold so peynen him, that with bothe his yen
He moste wynke, so lowde he wolde crien,
And stonden on his typtoon therwithal,
And streche forth his necke long and smal.
And eek he was of such discressioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel thasse

16775. Two lines omitted here by accident in the Harl. MS. are supplied from the Lansd. MS.

16798—*in daun Burnel.* The reference, of course, is to the celebrated satirical poem of Nigellus Wireker, entitled, *Burnellus.* It was one of the most popular Latin poems of the middle ages.

Among his verses, how ther was a cok,
That, for a prestes sone gaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whil he was yong and nyce,
He made him for to lese his benefice.
But certeyn ther is no comparisoun
Betwix the wisdom and discressioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtilté.
Now syngeth, sire, for seinte Charité;
Let se, can ye your fader countrefete?"
This Chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete,
As man that couthe his tresoun nought espye,
So was he ravyssht with his flaterie.

Allas! ye lordlynges, many a fals flatour
Is in your hous, and many a losengour,
That pleasen yow wel more, by my faith,
Than he that sothfastnesse unto yow saith.
Redith Ecclesiast of flaterie;
Beth war, ye lordes, of her treccherie.

This Chaunteclere stood heighe upon his toos,
Strecching his necke, and held his yhen cloos,
And gan to crowe lowde for the noones;
And daun Russel the fox stert up at oones,
And by the garget hente Chaunteclere,
And on his bak toward the woode him bere.
For yit was there no man that him sewed.
O desteny, that maist not ben eschiewed!
Allas, that Chaunteclere fleigh fro the bemis!

16812—*hous.* The Lansdowne MS. reads *courte*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

16820—*daun Russel.* Russel was a common name given to the fox, from his colour.

Allas, his wif ne roughte nought of dremis!
And on a Friday fel al this mischaunce.
O Venus, that art goddes of pleasaunce,
Syn that thy servant was this Chaunteclere,
And in thy service did al his powere,
More for delit, than the world to multiplie,
Why woldest thou suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan the worthy king Richard was slayn
With schot, compleynedist his deth so sore,
Why ne had I nought thy sentence and thy lore,
The Friday for to chiden, as dede ye?
(For on a Fryday sothly slayn was he).
Than wold I schewe how that I couthe pleyne,
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certis such cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun

16833—*O Gaufred.* Geoffrey de Vinsauf, the author of a celebrated medieval treatise on writing poetry, entitled, *Nova Poetria.* Tyrwhitt has quoted the bombastic lines on the death of Richard I, which are given as a specimen of the plaintive style, and are here ridiculed by Chaucer. They are,—

Neustria, sub clypeo regis defensa Ricardi,
Indefensa modo, gestu testare dolorem.
Exundent oculi lacrymas; exterminet ora
Pallor; connodet digitos tortura; cruentet
Interiora dolor, et verberet æthera clamor.
Tota peris ex morte sua. Mors non fuit ejus,
Sed tua; non una, sed publica mortis origo.
O Veneris lacrymosa dies! o sydus amarum!
Illa dies tua nox fuit, et Venus illa venenum.
Illa dedit vulnus, &c.

These lines are sufficient to shew the object, and the propriety, of Chaucer's ridicule. The whole poem is printed in Leyser's *Hist. Po. Med. Ævi*, p. 862—978.

16836—*sentence.* This is the reading of the Harl. and Lansd. MSS.; Tyrwhitt prints *science*, which weakens the sense.

Was wonne, and Pirrus with his strit swerd,
Whan he had hente kyng Priam by the berd,
And slaugh him (as saith us *Eneydos*),
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan thay had sayn of Chauntecler the sight.
But soveraignly dam Pertelote schright,
Ful lowder than did Hasdrubaldes wyf,
Whan that hir housebond had lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns had i-brent Cartage,
Sche was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully unto the fuyr sche stert,
And brend hirselven with a stedfast hert.
O woful hennes, right so cride ye,
As, whan that Nero brente the cité
Of Rome, criden the senatoures wyves,
For that her housbondes losten alle here lyves;
Withouten gult this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my matier agayn.
The sely wydow, and hir doughtres tuo,
Herden these hennys crie and maken wo,
And out at dores starte thay anoon,
And sayden the fox toward the woode is goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
They criden, "out! harrow and wayleway!
Ha, ha, the fox!" and after him thay ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlond,
And Malkyn, with a distaf in hir hond;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges
So were they fered for berkyng of dogges,

And schowtyng of the men and wymmen eke,
Thay ronne that thay thought her herte breke.
Thay yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle;
The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve came the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a *benedicite!*
Certes he Jakke Straw, and his meyné,
Ne maden schoutes never half so schrille,
Whan that thay wolden eny Flemyng kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras thay broughten hornes and of box,
Of horn and boon, in which thay blew and powped,
And therwithal thay schryked and thay howped;
It semed, as that heven schulde falle.

Now, goode men, I pray herkneth alle;
Lo, how fortune torneth sodeinly
The hope and pride eek of her enemy.
This cok that lay upon this foxes bak,
In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,
And saide, "sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet schuld I sayn (as wis God helpe me),
Turneth agein, ye proude cherles alle;
A verray pestilens upon yow falle.
Now am I come unto this woodes syde,
Maugré youre hede, the cok schal heer abyde;
I wol him ete in faith, and that anoon."

16884—*hornes.* Tyrwhitt reads *beemes.*

16890—*enemy.* The Harl. MS. reads *envy;* but as this does not seem to make good sense, I have taken the reading printed by Tyrwhitt.

The fox answerd, "in faith, it schal be doon."
And whil he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth delyverly,
And heigh upon a tree he fleigh anoon.
And whan the fox seigh that he was i-goon,
"Allas!" quod he, "o Chaunteclere, allas!
I have to yow," quod he, "y-don trespas,
Inasmoche as I makid yow aferd,
Whan I yow hent, and brought out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dede it in no wicked entent:
Com doun, and I schal telle yow what I ment.
I schal say soth to yow, God help me so."
"Nay than," quod he, "I schrew us bothe tuo.
And first I schrew myself, bothe blood and boones,
If thou bigile me any ofter than oones.
Thou schalt no more thurgh thy flaterye
Do me to synge and wynke with myn ye.
For he that wynkith, whan he scholde see,
Al wilfully, God let him never the."
"Nay," quod the fox, "but God give him meschaunce,
That is so undiscret of governaunce,
That jangleth, whan he scholde holde his pees."
Lo, such it is for to be recheles
And necgligent, and trust on flaterie.
But ye that holde this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok or hen,
Takith the moralité therof, goode men.
For seint Poul saith, that all that writen is,
To oure doctrine it is i-write i-wis.
Takith the fruyt, and let the chaf be stille.

Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille, 16930
As saith my lord, so make us alle good men;
And bring us alle to his blisse. *Amen.*

THE PROLOGE OF THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

Wot ye not wher ther stont a litel toun,
Which that cleped is Bob-up-and-doun,

16931—*As saith my Lord.* "Opposite to this verse, in the margin of MS. c. 1, is written *Kauntuar*, which means, I suppose, that some Archbishop of Canterbury is quoted."—*Tyrwhitt.*

16932. In the MS. in which the Nun's Priest's Tale is followed by that of the Nun, sixteen lines are inserted here, which are given as follows by Tyrwhitt,—

Sire Nonnes Preest, our hoste sayde anon,
Yblessed be thy breche and every ston;
This was a mery tale of Chaunteclere.
But by my trouthe, if thou were seculere,
Thou woldest ben a tredefoule aright:
For if thou had corage as thou hast might,
Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
Ye mo than seven times seventene.
Se, whiche braunes hath this gentil preest,
So gret a necke, and swiche a large breest!
He loketh as a sparhauk with his eyen;
Him nedeth not his colour for to dien
With Brasil, ne with grain of Portingal.
But, sire, faire falle you for your tale.
And after that, he with ful mery chere
Sayd to another, as ye shulen here.

Whatever be the authority of these lines, they are evidently imperfect at the end, and Tyrwhitt printed them as being so; but two MSS. which he examined gave the last of them thus,—

"Seide unto *the nunne* as ye shul heer."

And added the following lines to fill up the apparent vacuum,—

"Madame, and I dorste, I wolde you pray
To telle a tale in fortheringe of our way.
Than mighte ye do unto us grete ese.
Gladly, sire, quoth she, so that I might plese
You and this worthy company,
And began hire tale riht thus ful sobrely."

16934—*Bob-up-and-doun.* This appears to have been the popular name for the village of Harbledown, a short distance from Canterbury,

Under the Ble, in Caunterbury way?
Ther gan our hoste for to jape and play,
And sayde, "sires, what? Dun is in the myre.
Is ther no man for prayer ne for hyre,
That wol awake our felawe al byhynde?
A theef mighte ful lightly robbe and bynde. 16940
Se how he nappith, se, for Goddes boones,
That he wol falle fro his hors at ones.
Is that a cook of Londoune, with meschaunce?
Do him come forth, he knoweth his penaunce;
For he schal telle a tale, by my fay,

---

which by its situation on a hill, and the ups and downs on the road, merits well such an appellation. It stands on the edge of the Ble, or Blean Forest, which was formerly celebrated for its wildness. Erasmus, in one of his colloquies, the *Pilgrimage for religion's sake*, describes this place exactly, when he tells us that, "those who journey to London, not long after leaving Canterbury, find themselves in a road at once very hollow and narrow, and besides the banks on either side are so steep and abrupt that you cannot escape." See Mr. J. G. Nichols's translation of the *Pilgrimage* of Erasmus, p. 60.

16944—*Do him come forth.* Tyrwhitt observes on this,—"The common reading is—do him *comfort*. The alteration is material, not only as it gives a clearer sense, but as it intimates to us, that the narrator of a tale was made to come out of the crowd, and to take his place within hearing of the host, during his narration. Agreeably to this notion when the host calls upon Chaucer, ver. 13628, he says,

Approche nere, and loke up merily.
Now ware you, sires, and let this man have place.

It was necessary that the host, who was to be "juge and reportour" of the tales (ver. 816), should hear them all distinctly. The others might hear as much as they could, or as they chose, of them. It would have required the lungs of a Stentor, to speak audibly to a company of thirty people, trotting on together in a road of the fourteenth century." We must, however, not take things too literally in the *Canterbury Tales*, for it is evident that the Manciples Tale, and the long discourse of the parson, would require more time than could be allowed by the distance between Harbledown and Canterbury, and we might suppose they proceeded very slowly, and such as listened to the tale kept round the speaker, and probably halted from time to time.

16948—*to slepe by the morwe.* "This must be understood generally for the *day-time*; as it was then afternoon."—*Tyrwhitt.*

Although it be nought worth a botel hay.
Awake, thou cook, sit up, God gif the sorwe!
What eyleth the, to slepe by the morwe?
Hast thou had fleen al night or artow dronke?
Or hastow with som quen al night i-swonke,
So that thou maist not holden up thyn heed?"
This cook, that was ful pale and nothing reed,
Sayd to our host, "So God my soule blesse,
As ther is falle on me such hevynesse,
Not I nought why, that me were lever slepe,
Than the beste galoun wyn that is in Chepe."
"Wel," quod the Maunciple, "if that I may doon ease
To the, sir Cook, and to no wight displease
Which that her rydeth in this compaignye,
And our host wolde of his curteisie,
I wol as now excuse the of thy tale;
For in good faith thi visage is ful pale.
Thyn eyen daswen eek, al so me thinkith,
And wel I woot, thy breth ful foule stynkith,
That scheweth eek thou art nought wel disposid;
Of me certeyn thou schalt nought ben i-glosed.
Se how he ganith, lo, this dronken wight,
As though he wolde swolwe us anoon right.
Hold clos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kynne!
The devel of helle sette his foot therinne!
Thy cursed breth effecte wil us alle.

16967—*ganith*, i.e., *yawns*. This is certainly a better reading than Tyrwhitt's *galpeth*. The Lansd. MS. reads *goth*.

16971—*effecte*. Tyrwhitt has *enfecten* which is perhaps the better reading.

Fy, stynkyng swyne! foule mot the falle!
A! takith heed, sires, of this lusty man.
Now, swete sir, wol ye joust atte fan?
Therto, me thinkth, ye beth right wel i-schape.
I trowe that ye dronken han wyn of ape,
And that is whan men playen with a straw."
And with his speche the Cook wax angry and wraw,
And on the Maunciple bygan he nodde fast
For lak of speche; and doun the hors him cast, 16980
Wher as he lay, til that men him up took.
This was a fair chivaché of a cook!
Allas! that he nad hold him by his ladil!
And er that he agayn were in his sadil,
Ther was gret schowvyng bothe to and fro

16974—*wol ye joust atte fan?* Some MSS. read—*van*. The sense of both words is the same. "The thing meant is the quintaine, which is called a fan or vane, from its turning round like a weathercock."—*Tyrwhitt*.

16976—*wyn of ape*. "This is the reading of the best manuscripts, and I believe the true one. The explanation in the Gloss. of this and the preceding passage, from Mr. Speght, is too ridiculous to be repeated. *Wine of ape* I understand to mean the same as *vin de singe* in the old *Calendrier des Bergiers*, sign. l. ii, b. The author is treating of physiognomy, and in his description of the four temperaments he mentions, among other circumstances, the different effects of wine upon them. The choleric, he says, *a vin de lyon; cest a dire, quant a bien beu veult tanser, noyser, et battre*—the sanguine, *a vin de singe; quant a plus beu tant est plus joyeux*—in the same manner the phlegmatic is said to have *vin de mouton*, and the melancholic *vin de porceau*. I find the same four animals applied to illustrate the effects of wine in a little Rabbinical tradition, which I shall transcribe here from Fabric. Cod. Pseudepig. V. T. vol. i, p. 275. *Vineas plantanti Noacho Satanam se junxisse memorant, qui, dum Noa vites plantaret, mactaverit apud illas* ovem, leonem, simiam, *et* suem: *quod principio potus vini homo sit instar* ovis, *vinum sumptum efficiat ex homine* leonem, *largius haustum mutet eum in saltantem* simiam, *ad ebrietatem infusum transformet illum in pollutam et prostratam* suem. See also *Gesta Romanorum*, c. 159, where a story of the same purport is quoted from Josephus, *in libro de casu rerum naturaliam*."—*Tyrwhitt*.

To lift him up, and moche care and wo,
So unwelde was this sory pallid gost.
And to the Maunciple thanne spak oure host:
"Bycause drink hath dominacioun
Upon this man, by my savacioun
I trow he lewedly tel wol his tale.
For were it wyn, or old moysty ale,
That he hath dronk, he spekith in his nose,
And snesith fast, and eek he hath the pose.
He also hath to do more than y-nough
To kepe him and his capil out of the slough;
And if he falle fro his capil eftsone,
Than schal we alle have y-nough to doone
In liftyng up his hevy dronken cors.
Tel on thy tale, of him make I no fors.
But yit, Maunciple, in faith thou art to nyce,
Thus openly reproeve him of his vice;
Another day he wil *par adventure*
Reclayme the, and bringe the to lure;
I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,
As for to pynchyn at thy rekenynges,
That were not honest, if it cam to pref."
Quod the Maunciple, "That were a gret meschief;
So might he lightly bringe me in the snare.
Yit had I lever payen for the mare
Which he ryt on, than he schuld with me stryve.
I wil not wrath him, al so mot I thrive;
That that I spak, I sayd it in my bourde.
And wite ye what? I have heer in a gourde
A draught of wyn, is of a ripe grape,

And right anoon ye schal se a good jape.
This cook schal drinke therof, if I may;
Up peyn of deth he wol nought say me nay."
And certeinly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the cook dronk fast, (allas! 17020
What needid it? he drank y-nough biforn);
And whan he hadde pouped in his horn,
To the Maunciple he took the gourd agayn.
And of that draught the cook was wonder fayn,
And thanked him in such wise as he couthe.
Than gan our host to laughe wonder louthe,
And sayd, "I se wel it is necessarie
Wher that we go good drynk with us to carie;
For that wol torne rancour and desese
To accord and love, and many a wrong apese. 17030
O thou Bacus, i-blessid be thin name,
That so canst torne ernest into game;
Worschip and thonke be to thy deité!
Of that matier ye get no more of me.
Tel on thi tale, Mauncipel, I the pray."
"Wel, sir," quod he, "now hearkyn what I say."

THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

WHAN Phebus duelt her in this erthe adoun,
As olde bookes maken mencioun,

17030—*a wrong apese.* I take Tyrwhitt's reading of this passage, because no better reading presents itself. The MSS. seem in general more or less corrupt. The Harl. MS. reads, *many racour pese;* while in the Lansd. MS. it stands, *mony worde to pese.*

The Maunciples Tale.—This tale is, of course, a medieval version of

He was the moste lusty bachiler
Of al this world, and eek the best archer.
He slough Phiton the serpent, as he lay
Slepyng agayn the sonne upon a day;
And many another noble worthy dede
He with his bowe wrought, as men may rede.
Pleyen he couthe on every mynstralcye,
And syngen, that it was a melodye
To heren of his cleere vois the soun.
Certes the kyng of Thebes, Amphioun,
That with his singyng wallid that citee,
Couth never synge half so wel as he.
Therto he was the semlieste man,
That is or was, siththen the world bigan;
What nedith it his fetures to descrive?
For in this worlde, is noon so faire on lyve.
He was therwith fulfild of gentilesce,
Of honour, and of parfyte worthinesse.
This Phebus, that was flour of bachilerie,
As wel in fredom, as in chivalrie,
For to disport, in signe of victorie
Of Phiton, so as telleth us the storie,
Was wont to bere in his hond a bowe.

---

an old classic story, the original of which will be found in the *Metamorphoses of Ovid*. The story is found in medieval writers under a variety of forms. One of them occurs in the old collection of tales entitled the *Seven Sages;* another version is given in Gower.

17053—*fetures*. The Harl. MS. reads *fortune;* but the reading I have here adopted from the Lansd. MS. is evidently the more correct one.

17054—*so faire*. The Harl. MS. has here, again, what appears to be an incorrect reading, *noon such on lyve*, and I have again followed the Lansd. MS.

Now had this Phebus in his hous a crowe,
Which in a cage he fostred many a day,
And taught it speken, as men doon a jay.
Whit was this crowe, as is a snow-whyt swan,
And countrefete the speche of every man
He couthe, whan he schulde telle a tale.
Ther is withinne this world no nightingale
Ne couthe by an hundred thousend del
Singe so wonder merily and wel.
Now had this Phebus in his hous a wyf,
Which that he loved more than his lif,
And night and day did evermor diligence
Hir for to please, and doon hir reverence;
Sauf oonly, if the soth that I schal sayn,
Jalous he was, and wold have kept hir fayn,
For him were loth bijaped for to be;
And so is every wight in such degré;
But al for nought, for it availeth nought.
A good wyf, that is clene of werk and thought,
Schuld not be kept in noon awayt certayn;
And trewely the labour is in vayn
To kepe a schrewe, for it wil nought be.
This hold I for a verray nyceté,
To spille labour for to kepe wyves;
Thus olde clerkes writen in her lyves.
But now to purpos, as I first bigan.
This worthi Phebus doth al that he can
To pleasen hir, wenyng by such plesaunce,
And for his manhod and his governaunce,
That no man schuld han put him fro hir grace.

But God it woot, ther may no man embrace
As to distroy a thing, the which nature
Hath naturelly set in a creature.
Tak any brid, and put him in a cage,
And do al thin entent, and thy corrage,
To foster it tenderly with mete and drynk,
And with alle the deyntees thou canst think,
And keep it al so kyndly as thou may;
Although his cage of gold be never so gay,
Yit hath this brid, by twenty thousand fold,
Lever to be in forest, wyld and cold,
Gon ete wormes, and such wrecchidnes.
For ever this brid wil doon his busynes
To scape out of his cage whan he may;
His liberté the brid desireth aye.
Let take a cat, and foster him wel with mylk
And tender fleisch, and mak his bed of silk,
And let him see a mous go by the wal,
Anoon he wayveth mylk and fleisch, and al,
And every deynté which is in that hous,
Such appetit hath he to ete the mous.
Lo, heer hath kynd his dominacioun,
And appetit flemeth discretioun.

17093—*distroy*. The Lansd. MS. has *discryve*, and Tyrwhitt has adopted *distreine*, which may perhaps be the best reading.

17095—*Tak any brid*. This and the following examples are all taken, as observed by Tyrwhitt, from the *Roman de la Rose*, but it is hardly necessary to give particular references to each.

17108—*his bed*. The Lansd. MS. reads *couche*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt. It may be observed that Tyrwhitt's text speaks of the cat in the feminine gender, whereas the Harl. and Lansd. MSS. use the masculine, as in the present text.

Al so a sche wolf hath a vilayns kynde;
The lewidest wolf that sche may fynde,
Or lest of reputacioun, him wol sche take
In tyme whan hir lust to have a make.
Alle this ensamples tel I by this men
That ben untrewe, and nothing by wommen.
For men han ever a licorous appetit
On lower thing to parforme her delit
Than on her wyves, ben thay never so faire,
Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.
Fleissch is so newfangil, with meschaunce,
That we can in no thinge have plesaunce
That souneth into vertue eny while.
This Phebus, which that thought upon no gile,
Deceyved was for al his jolité;
For under him another hadde sche,
A man of litil reputacioun,
Nought worth to Phebus in comparisoun;
Mor harm it is; it happeth ofte so;
Of which ther cometh bothe harm and woo.
And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,
His wif anoon hath for hir lemman sent.
Hir lemman? certes, this is a knavisch speche.
Forgiveth it me, and that I yow biseche.
The wise Plato saith, as ye may rede,
The word mot neede accorde with the dede,
If men schal telle propurly a thing,
The word mot corde with the thing werkyng.

17142—*mot corde with the thing werkyng.* This is the reading of the Harl. MS., which makes perfectly good sense. Tyrwhitt, like the Lansd. MS., reads *must cosin be to the werking.*

I am a boystous man, right thus say I;
Ther is no difference trewely
Bytwix a wyf that is of heigh degré,
(If of hir body dishonest sche be)
And a pore wenche, other then this,
(If so be thay werke bothe amys)
But that the gentil in estat above
Sche schal be cleped his lady as in love;
And, for that other is a pore womman,
Sche schal be cleped his wenche and his lemman;
And God it wot, my goode lieve brother,
Men layn that oon as lowe as lith that other.
Right so bitwixe a titleles tirant
And an outlawe, or a thef erraunt,
The same I say, there is no differênce,
(To Alisaunder told was this sentence)
But, for the tiraunt is of greter might
By force of meyné for to sle doun right,
And brenne hous and home, and make al playn,
Lo, therfor is he cleped a capitayn;
And, for an outlawe hath so smal meyné,
And may not doon so gret an harm as he,
Ne bringe a contré to so gret meschief,
Men clepen him an outlawe or a theef.
But, for I am a man not texted wel,
I wil not telle of textes never a del;
I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.
Whan Phebus wyf had sent for hir lemman,

17155—*a titleles.* This is Tyrwhitt's reading; the Harl. MS. has *atticles*, which is evidently corrupt, and the Lansd. *a titles.*

Anon thay wroughten al her wil volage.
This white crow, that heng alway in cage,
Bihild her werk, and sayde never a word.
And whan that hom was come Phebus the lord,
This crowe song, "cuckow, cuckow, cuckow!"
"What? brid," quod Phebus, "what song syngistow now?
Ne were thou wont so merily to synge,
That to myn hert it was a rejoysynge
To here thi vois? allas! what song is this?"
"By God," quod he, "I synge not amys. 17180
Phebus," quod he, "for al thy worthynes,
For al thy beauté, and thy gentiles,
For alle thy songes, and thy menstralcie,
For al thy waytyng, blered is thin ye,
With oon of litel reputacioun,
Nought worth to the as in comparisoun
The mountauns of a gnat, so mot I thrive;
For on thy bed thy wif I saugh him swyve."
What wol ye more? the crowe anoon him tolde,
By sadde toknes, and by wordes bolde, 17190
How that his wyf had doon hir leccherie
Him to gret schame, and to gret vilonye;
And told him oft he saugh it with his yen.
This Phebus gan away-ward for to wryen;
Him thought his sorwful herte brast on tuo.
His bowe he bent, and sett therin a flo;
And in his ire he hath his wif i-slayn;
This is theffect, ther is no more to sayn.
For sorw of which he brak his menstralcye,
Bothe harp and lute, gitern, and sauterie; 17200

And eek he brak his arwes, and his bowe;
And after that thus spak he to the crowe;
"Traytour," quod he, "with tunge of scorpioun,
Thow hast me brought to my confusioun;
Allas that I was born! why nere I deed?
O dere wyf, O gemme of lustyhed,
That were to me so sad, and eek so trewe,
Now list thou deed, with face pale of hewe,
Ful gulteles, that dorst I swere y-wis.
O racle hond, to do so foule amys. 17210
O trouble wit, O ire recheles,
That unavysed smytest gulteles.
O wantrust, ful of fals suspeccioun,
Wher was thy wit and thy discrecioun?
O, every man be ware of raclenesse,
Ne trowe no thing withoute gret witnesse.
Smyt nought to soone, er that thou wite why,
And be avysed wel and sobrely,
Er ye doon eny execucioun
Upon your ire for suspeccioun. 17220
Allas! a thousand folk hath racle ire
Fordoon, or Dun hath brought hem in the myre.
Allas! for sorw I wil myselven sle."
And to the crowe, "O false theef," sayd he,
"I wil the quyt anoon thy false tale.
Thow songe whilom, as any nightyngale,
Now schaltow, false thef, thy song forgoon,

17222—*Dun.* See before, l. 16937. It is said that this proverbial expression arose from a popular game, which was in use at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and is alluded to in the early dramatists. Dun, of course, is the name of a horse.

And eek thy white fetheres, everichoon,
Ne never in al thy lyf ne schaltow speke;
Thus schal men on a fals theef ben awreke.
Thou and thin ofspring ever schuln be blake,
Ne never sweete noyse schul ye make,
But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn,
In tokenyng, that thurgh the my wyf was slayn."
And to the crowe he stert, and that anoon,
And puld his white fetheres everychoon,
And made him blak, and raft him al his song,
And eek his speche, and out at dore him slong
Unto the devel, which I him bytake;
And for this cause ben alle crowes blake.
Lordyngs, by this ensample, I yow pray,
Beth war, and taketh kepe what ye say;
Ne tellith never man in al youre lif,
How that another man hath dight his wyf;
He wol yow hatin mortelly certeyn.
Daun Salamon, as wise clerkes seyn,
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel;
But, as I sayd, I am nought tixted wel.
But natheles thus taughte me my dame:
"My sone, thenk on the crowe, in Goddes name.
My son, keep wel thy tonge, and kep thy frend;
A wicked tonge is worse than a feend;
My sone, fro a feend men may hem blesse.
My sone, God of his endeles goodnesse
Wallid a tonge with teeth, and lippes eek,
For man schal him avyse what he speek.
My sone, ful ofte for to mochil speche

Hath many a man be spilt, as clerkes teche;
But for a litil speche avisily
Is no man schent, to speke generally.
My sone, thy tonge scholdest thou restreigne
At alle tyme, but whan thou dost thy peyne
To speke of God in honour and prayere.
The firste vertue, sone, if thou wilt lere,
Is to restreigne and kepe wel thy tonge;
Thus lerne clerkes, whan that thay ben yonge.
My sone, of mochil speking evel avised,
Ther lasse speking had y-nough suffised,
Cometh mochil harm; thus was me told and taught;
In mochel speche synne wantith nought.
Wost thou wherof a racle tonge serveth?
Right as a swerd for-kutteth and for-kerveth
An arm atuo, my dere sone, right so
A tonge cutteth frendschip al atuo.
A jangler is to God abhominable.
Red Salomon, so wys and honurable,
Red David in his Psalmes, reed Senek.
My sone, spek not, but with thy heed thou bek,
Dissimul as thou were deed, if that thou heere
A jangler speke of perilous mateere.
The Flemyng saith, and lere it if the lest,
That litil jangling causeth mochil rest.
My sone, if thou no wikked word hast sayd,

17264—*The firste vertue.* This is taken from *Cato de Moribus*, lib. i, dist. 3,—

Virtutem primam esse puta compescere linguam.

Cato was one of the first books put into the hands of young scholars, which explains the remarks here made in l. 17266.

The thar not drede for to be bywrayd;
But he that hath myssayd, I dar wel sayn,
He may by no way clepe his word agayn.
Thing that is sayd is sayd, and forth it goth,
Though him repent, or be him never so loth,
He is his thral, to whom that he hath sayd
A tale, of which he is now yvel apayd.
My sone, be war, and be noon auctour newe
Of tydyngs, whether thay ben fals or trewe;
Wher so thou comest, amonges heih or lowe,
Kep wel thy tonge, and thenk upon the crowe."

THE PROLOGE OF THE PERSONES TALE.

By that the Maunciple had his tale endid,

17291—*be noon auctour newe.* This is taken also from *Cato*, lib. i, dist. 2,—

Rumores fuge, ne incipias novus auctor haberi,

Which Chaucer seems to have read,—

Rumoris fuge ne incipias novus auctor haberi.

17299—*Ten.* I have not ventured to change the reading of the Harl. MS., which is partly supported by that of the Lansd. MS. *Than.* Tyrwhitt, who reads *foure*, makes the following observation on this passage. "In this Prologue, which introduces the last tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day; but the hour by the clock is very differently represented in the MSS. In some it is *ten*, in others *two:* in most of the best MSS. *foure*" (Tyrwhitt's judgment of the MSS. is not to be depended upon), "and in one *five*. According to the phænomena here mentioned, the sun being 29° high, and the length of the shadow to the projecting body as eleven to six, it was *between foure and five*. As by this reckoning there were at least three hours left to sunset, one does not well see with what propriety the host admonishes the person to *haste him*, because '*the sonne wol adoun*,' and to be '*fructuous in litel space;* and indeed *the person*, knowing probably how much time he had good, seems to have paid not the least regard to his admonition; for his tale, if it may be so called, is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in some MSS. '*Tractatus de Pœnitentia, pro fabula, ut dicitur, Rectoris;* and I much suspect that it is a translation of some such treatise."

The sonne fro the south line is descendid
So lowe, that it nas nought to my sight
Degrees nyne and twenty as in hight.
Ten on the clokke it was, as I gesse,
For enleven foote, or litil more or lesse,
My schadow was at thilk tyme of the yere,
Of which feet as my lengthe parted were
In sixe feet equal of proporcioun.
Therwith the mones exaltacioun,
In mena Libra, alway gan ascende,
As we were entryng at a townes ende.
For which our host, as he was wont to gye,
As in this caas, our joly compaignye,
Sayd in this wise: "Lordings, everichoon,
Now lakketh us no moo tales than oon,

17305—*In mena Libra.* "This is a very obscure passage. Some of the MSS. read *I mene Libra.* According to the reading which I have followed, *exaltation* is not to be considered as a technical term, but as signifying simply *rising;* and the sense will be, *that the moon's rising in the middle of Libra, was continually ascending, etc.* If *exaltation* be taken in its technical meaning, as explained in a former note, it will be impossible to make any sense of either of the readings: for the *exaltation of the moon* was not in *Libra*, but in *Taurus. Kalendrier des Bergiers*, sign. i, ult. Mr. Speght, I suppose, being aware of this, altered *Libra* into *Taurus;* but he did not consider, that the sun, which has just been said to be *descending*, was at that time in *Taurus*, and that consequently *Taurus* must also have been *descending. Libra* therefore, should by no means be parted with. Being in that part of the zodiac which is nearly opposite to *Taurus*, the place of the sun, it is very properly represented as *ascending* above the horizon toward the time of the sun's setting. If any alteration were to be admitted, I should be for reading—

Therwith *Saturnes* exaltation,
I mene Libra, alway gan ascende—

The exaltation of *Saturn* was in *Libra. Kalendrier des Bergers*, sign. K. i."—*Tyrwhitt.*

17306—*a townes.* The Lansd. MS. reads, *at the thropes ende.*

Fulfilled is my sentens and my decré;
I trowe that we han herd of ech degré.
Almost fulfilled is myn ordynaunce;
I pray to God so geve him right good chaunce,
That tellith to us his tale lustily.
Sir prest," quod he, "artow a vicory?
Or artow a persoun? say soth, by thy fay.
Be what thou be, ne breke nought oure play;
For every man, save thou, hath told his tale.
Unbocle, and schew us what is in thy male.
For trewely me thinketh by thy chier,
Thou scholdist wel knyt up a gret matier.
Tel us a tale anoon, for cokkes boones!"
This Persoun him answerde al at oones:
"Thow getist fable noon i-told for me,
For Poul, that writes unto Thimothé,
Repreveth hem that weyveth sothfastnesse,
And tellen fables, and such wrecchednesse.
Why schuld I sowen draf out of my fest,
Whan I may sowe whete, if that me lest?
For which I say, if that yow lust to hiere
Moralité and vertuous matiere,
And thanne that ye wil give me audience,
I wol ful fayn at Cristis reverence
Do yow plesaunce leful, as I can.
But trusteth wel, I am a suthern man,
I can not geste, rum, raf, ruf, by letter,

17320 17330

17323—*tale*. The Lansd. MS. reads *fable*, which is the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt, and it seems to be authorized by the parson's reply.

17337—*rum, raf, ruf*. This seems generally to be understood as an ironical allusion to the popular alliterative verse of Chaucer's age, in contradistinction to rhyme, which is spoken of in the line following.

Ne, God wot, rym hold I but litel better.
And therfor, if yow lust, I wol not glose,
I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose,
To knyt up al this fest, and make an ende;
And Jhesu for his grace wit me sende
To schewe yow the way, in this viage,
Of thilke perfyt glorious pilgrimage
That hatte Jerusalem celestial.
And if ye vouchesauf, anoon I schal
Bygynne my tale, for which I yow pray
Telle your avis, I can no better say.
But natheles this meditacioun
I put it ay under correccioun
Of clerkes, for I am not textuel;
I take but the sentens, trustith wel.
Therfor I make protestacioun,
That I wol stonde to correccioun."
Upon this word we han assented soone.
For, as it semed, it was for to done,
To enden in som vertuous sentence,
And for to geve him space and audience;
And bad oure host he schulde to him say,
That alle we to telle his tale him pray.
Our host hadde the wordes for us alle:
"Sir prest," quod he, "now faire yow bifalle;
Say what yow lust, and we wil gladly hiere."
And with that word he said in this manere;
"Telleth," quod he, "your meditacioun;
But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun.
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
And to do wel God sende yow his grace."

THE PERSONES TALE.

Jer. 6°. *State super vias, et videte et interrogate de semitis antiquis quæ sit via bona, et ambulate in ea, et invenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, etc.*

Owre swete Lord God of heven, that no man wil perische, but wol that we comen alle to the knowleche of him, and to the blisful lif that is perdurable, ammonestith us by the prophet Jeremye, that saith in this wise: Stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde pathes, that is to sayn, of old sentence, which is the good way, and walketh in that way, and ye schul fynde refresshyng for youre soules, etc. Many ben the wayes espirituels that leden folk to oure Lord Jhesu Christ, and to the regne of glorie; of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble way, and ful covenable, which may not faile to man ne to womman, that thorugh synne hath mysgon fro the right way of Jerusalem celestial; and this wey is cleped penitence. Of which men schulden gladly herken and enquere with al here herte, to wyte what is penitence, and whens it is cleped penitence, and in what maner, and in how many maneres been the acciones or workynges of penance, and how many spieces ben of penitences, and whiche thinges apperteynen and byhoven to penitence, and whiche thinges destourben penitence.

The Persones Tale. In all probability this is a free translation of some treatise upon penitence, but it is hardly worth our while to look far after the original. Tyrwhitt's opinion has been given in the note on l. 17299. The references to Scripture, and to the theological writers of the Romish Church, are so numerous that I shall not attempt to verify them.

Seint Ambrose saith, that penitence is the pleynyng of man for the gult that he hath doon, and no more to do ony thing for which him oughte to pleigne. And som doctour saith, penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorweth for his synne, and peyneth himself for he hath mysdoon. Penitence, with certeyn circumstaunces, is verray repentaunce of man, that holt himself in sorwe and in woo for his giltes; and for he schal be verray penitent, he schal first bywaile the synnes that he hath do, and stedfastly purposen in his hert to haven schrifte of mouth, and to doon satisfaccioun, and never to do thing for which him oughte more to bywayle or to complayne, and to continue in goode werkes, or elles his repentaunce may nought avayle. For, as saith seint Isidor, he is a japere and a gabbere, and no verray repentaunt, that eftsoone doth thing for which him oughte to repente. Wepynge, and nought for to stynte to doon synne, may nought avayle. But natheles, men schal hope that at every tyme that men fallith, be it never so ofte, that he may arise thorugh penitence, if he have grace; but certeyn it is gret doute. For as saith seint Gregory, unnethe arist he out of his synne that is charged with the charge of yvel usage. And therfore repentaunt folk that stinte for to synne and forlete synne er that synne forlete hem, holy chirche holt hem siker of her savacioun. And he that synneth, and verraily repentith him in his last ende, holy chirche yit hopeth his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, for his repentaunce; but take ye the siker way.

And now sith that I have declared yow, what thing is penitence, now schul ye understonde, that ther ben thre acciouns of penitence. The first is, that if a man be baptized after that he hath synned. Seint Augustyn saith, but if he be penitent for his olde synful lif, he may not bygynne the newe clene lif. For certes, if he be baptized withoute penitence of his olde gilt, he receyveth the mark of baptisme, but nought the grace, ne the remissioun of his synnes, til he have repentaunce verray. Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly synne after that thay have receyved baptisme. The thridde defaute is, that men fallen into venial synne after here baptisme fro day to day. Therof saith seint Austyn, that penitence of goode men, and of humble folk, is the penitens of every day.

The spices of penitence ben thre. That oon of hem is solempne, another is comune, and the thridde is pryvé. Thilke penaunce that is solempne, is in tuo maners; as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente, for slaughtre of childre, and such maner thing. Another is, whan a man hath synned openly, of which synne the fame is openly spoken in the contré; and thanne holy chirche by juggement streyneth him to doon open penaunce. Comune penaunce is, that prestes enjoynen men comunly in certeyn caas, as for to goon peradventure naked in pilgrimage, or barfot. Privé penaunce is thilk that men doon alday for privé synnes, of whiche we schryve us prively, and receyven privé penaunce.

Now schalt thou understonde what bihoveth and is

necessarie to verray perfyt penitence; and this stondith in thre thinges, contricioun of hert, confessioun of mouth, and satisfaccioun. For whiche saith seint Johan Crisostom, penitence distreyneth a man to accepte benignely every peyne that him is enjoyned with contricioun of herte, and schrift of mouth, with satisfaccioun, and werking of alle maner humbleté. And this is fruytful penitence agayn tho thre thinges, in whiche we wraththe oure Lord Jhesu Crist; this is to sayn, by delit in thinking, by rechelesnes in speking, and by wicked synful werkyng. Again these thre wickid gultes is penitence, that may be likned unto a tre.

The roote of this tre is contricioun, that hydith him in the hert of him that is verray repentaunt, right as the roote of a tree hidith him in the eorthe. Of the roote of contricioun springeth a stalk, that bereth braunches and leeves of confessioun and fruyt of satisfaccioun. For whiche Crist saith in his Gospel, doth digne fruyt of penitence, for by this fruyt may men knowe this tree, and nought by the roote that is hyd in the hert of a man, ne by the braunches ne the levys of confessioun. And therfore oure Lord Jhesu Christ saith thus, by the fruyt of hem schul ye knowe hem. Of this roote eek springeth a seed of grace, the which seed is mooder of sikurnes, and this seed is egre and hoote. The grace of this seed springeth of God, thorugh remembraunce of the day of doom, and of the peynes of helle. Of this matier saith Salomon, that in the drede of God man forleteth his synne. The hete of this seed is the love of God, and the desiring of the

joye perdurable. This hete draweth the hert of man to God, and doth him hate his synne. For sothe, ther is nothing that serveth so wel[1] to a child, as the milk of his norice, ne nothing is to him more abhominable than the milk whan it is melled with other mete.[2] Right so the synful man that loveth his synne, him semeth, it is to him most swete of eny thing; but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nys to him nothing more abhominable. For sothly the lawe of God is the love of God. For which Davyd saith, I have loved thy lawe, and hated wikkednesse and hate; he that loveth God, keepeth his lawe and his word. This tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit, upon the avysioun of Nabugodonosor, whan he counseiled him to do penaunce. Penaunce is tre of lif to hem that it receyven; and he that holdeth him in verray penitence, is blessed, after the sentence of Salomon.

In this penitence or contricioun men schal understonde foure thinges, that is to sayn, what is contricioun, and whiche ben the causes that moeven men to contricioun, and how he schulde be contrit, and what contricioun availeth to the soule. Thanne it is thus, that contricioun is the verray sorwe that a man receyveth in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to schryve him, and to doo penaunce, and never more to don synne. And this sorwe schal be in this maner, as

[1] *serveth so wel.* Tyrwhitt adopts the reading *savoureth so sote.*

[2] *melled with other mete.* The words *with other*, which seem necessary for the sense, although omitted in the Harl. MS., are adopted from the Lansd. MS.

saith seint Bernard; it schal ben hevy and grevous, and ful scharp and poynaunt in herte; first, for man hath agilted his Lord and his creatour; and more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath agiltid his fader celestial; and yit more scharp and poynaunt, for he hath wratthed and agilt him that bought him with his precious blood, and hath delyvered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the cruelté of the devel, and fro the peynes of helle.

The causes that oughten to moeve a man to contricioun ben vj. First, a man schal remembre him of his synnes. But loke that thilke remembraunce be to no delyt of him by no way, but gret schame and sorwe for his gilt. For Job saith that synful men doon werkes worthy of confessioun. And therfor saith Ezechiel, I wol remembre alle the yeres of my lif, in bitternesse of myn herte. And God saith in thapocalips, remembre yow from whens that ye ben falle, for biforn that tyme that ye synned, ye were the children of God, and lymme of the regne of God;[3] but for youre synne ye be woxe thral, and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclaunder of holy chirche, and foode of the fals serpent, perpetuel matier of the fuyr of helle, and yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound that torneth to ete his spewyng; and yet ye ben fouler for youre longe continuyng in synne, and youre synful usage, for whiche ye ben roten in youre synne, as a beest in his

[3] *and lymme . . . God.* These words, omitted in the Harl. MS., are supplied from the Lansd. MS.

donge. Suche maner of thoughtes make a man have schame of his synne, and no delit; and God saith, by the prophete Ezechiel, ye schul remembre yow of youre weyes, and thay schal displese yow. Sothly, synnes ben the way that leden folk to helle.

The secounde cause that oughte make a man to have disdeyn of his synne is this, that, as seith seint Petre, who so doth synne, is thral of synne, and synne put a man in gret thraldom. And therfore saith the prophete Ezechiel, I wente sorwful, in disdeyn of myself. Certes, wel oughte a man have disdeyn of synne, and withdrawe him fro that thraldom and vilonye. And lo what saith Seneca in this matiere. He saith thus, though I wiste, that nere God ne man schulde never knowe it, yit wold I have disdeyn for to do synne. And the same Seneca also saith, I am born to gretter thinges, than to be thral to my body, or than for to make of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may no man, ne womman, make of his body, than give his body to synne. And were it the foulest cherl, or the foulest womman, that lyveth, and lest of value, yet is thanne synne[4] more foul, and more in servitute. Ever fro the heigher degré that man fallith, the more is he thral, and more to God and to the world[5] vile and abhominable. O goode God! wel oughte a man have gret disdayn of such a thing that thorugh synne, ther he was free, now is he maked bonde. And therfore saith seint Austyn,

[4] *thanne synne.* Tyrwhitt reads, *yet is he than more foule.*

[5] *and to the world.* These words, taken from the Lansd. MS., are not in the Harl MS.

if thou hast disdayn of thy servaunt, if he agilte or synne, have thou than disdeigne,[6] that thou thiself schuldist do synne. Tak reward of thy value, that thou be nought to foul in thiself. Allas! wel oughte men have disdeyn to be servauntes and thralles to synne, and sore ben aschamed of hemself, that God of his endeles goodnes hath set hem in heigh estate, or geven hem witte, strength of body, hele, beauté, or prosperité, and bought hem fro the deth with his herte blood, that thay so unkindely ageinst his gentilesce quyten him so vileynsly, to slaughter of her oughne soules. O goode God! ye wommen that ben of so gret beauté, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon, that saith he likeneth a fair womman, that is a fool of hir body, to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a sowe; for right as a sowe wroteth in everich ordure, so wrootith sche hir beauté in stynkyng ordure of synne.

The thridde cause, that oughte to moeve a man to contricioun, is drede of the day of doome, and of the orrible peynes of helle. For as seint Jerom saith, at every tyme that I remembre of the day of doom, I quake; for whan I ete or drinke, or what so that I doo, ever semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn eere, riseth ye up that ben deede, and cometh to the juggement. O goode God! mochil ought a man to drede such a juggement, ther as we schul be alle, as seith seint Poul, biforn the sete of our Lord Jhesu Crist; wher as he schal make a general congregacioun, wher as

[6] *of thy servaunt . . . disdeigne.* These words, omitted by an evident error of the scribe in the Harl. MS., are supplied from the Lansd. MS.

no man may ben absent; for certes ther avayleth non essoyne ne excusacioun; and nought oonly, that oure defaute schal be juged, but eek that alle oure werkes schul[7] be openly knowen. And, as seint Bernard saith, ther schal no pleynyng avayle, ne no sleight; we schuln give rekenyng of every ydel word. Ther schulle we have a juge that may nought be disceyved ne corrupt; and why? for certes, alle oure thoughtes ben descovered as to him, ne for prayer ne for meede he nyl not be corupt. And therfore saith Salomon, the wraththe of God ne wol nought spare no wight, for praier ne for gift. And therfore at the day of doom ther is noon hope to eschape. Wherfore, as seint Anselm seith, ful greet anguisch schuln the synful folk have at that tyme; there schal be the sterne and the wroth juge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open, to destroye him that wolde not byknowe his synnes, which synnes openly ben schewed biforn God and biforn every creature; and on the lift syde, mo divelis than herte may thynke, for to hary and to drawe the synful soules to the pyne of helle; and withinne the hertes of folk schal be the bytyng conscience, and withoute forth schal be the world al brennyng. Whider schal thanne the wrecche synful man flee to hyden him? Certes he may not hyde him, he moot come forth and schewe him. For certes, as seith seynt Jerom, the erthe schal caste him out of him, and the see also, and the aer also, that schal be ful of

[7] *be juged . . . schul.* These words have been accidentally omitted in the Harl. MS. They are supplied from the Lansd. MS.

thunder clappes and lightnynges. Now sothly, who so wel remembrith him of these tydynges, I gesse his synne schal not torne him to delit, but to gret sorw, for drede of the peyne of helle. And therfore saith Job to God, suffre, Lord, that I may a while biwayle and wepe, or I go withoute retournynge to the derk lond, covered with derknes of deth, to the lond of mysese and of derknesse, wher as is the schadow of deth, wher as is noon order ne ordinaunce, but grislich drede that ever schal last. Loo, her may ye see, that Job prayde respit a while, to wepe and biwayle his trespas; for forsothe oon day of respit is bettre than al the tresor in this world. And for as moche as a man may aquyte himself byforn God by penaunce in this world, and not by tresor, therfore schuld he praye to God give him respit a while, to wepe and to waile his trespas. For certes, al the sorwe that a man myght make fro the begynnynge of the[8] world, nys but a litel thing, at regard of the sorwe of helle. The cause why that Job calleth helle the lond of derknes, understondith, that he clepith it lond or eorthe, for it is stable and never schal fayle, and derk, for he that is in helle hath defaut of light material; for certes the derke light that schal come out of the fuyr that ever schal brenne, schal torne him to peyne that is in helle, for it schewith him to thorrible develes that him tormenten. Covered with the derknes of deth; that is to sayn, that he that is in helle, schal have defaute of the sight of God; for certes

[8] *sorwe . . . the.* Omitted in the Harl. MS. They are supplied from the Lansd. MS.

the sight of God is the lif perdurable. The derknes of deth, ben the synnes that the wrecchid man hath doon, whiche that stourben him to see the face of God, right as a derk cloude doth bitwixe us and the sonne. Lond of myseyse; bycause that there ben thre maner of defautes agains thre thinges that folk of this world han in this present lif, that is to sayn, honures, delices, and richesses. Agayns honours han they in helle schame and confusioun; for wel ye witen, that men clepyn honure the reverence that men doon to the man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence; for certes no more reverence schal ben doon ther to a kyng, than to a knave. For which God saith by the prophete Jeremie, thilke folk that me displesen, schul be despit. Honour is eke cleped gret lordschipe. There schal no wight serven othir, but of harm and torment. Honour eek is cleped gret dignité and heighnes; but in helle schulle thay be al fortrode of develes. And God saith, thorrible develes schuln goon and comen upon the heedes of dampned folk; and this is, for als moche as the heyher that thay were in this present lif, the more schuln thay ben abatid and defouled in helle. Agayns riches of this world schuln thay han mysese of povert, and this povert schal be in iiij. thinges: in defaut of tresor; of which, as David saith, the riche folk that embraseden and onedin in al here herte the tresor of this world, schuln slepen in the slepyng of deth, and nothing schuln thay fynde in her hondes of al her tresor. And moreover, the mysease of helle schal be in the defaut of mete and drink. For God saith thus

by Moyses, thay schul be wasted by hunger, and the briddes of helle schuln devoure hem with bittir teeth, and the galle of the dragoun schal be her drink, and the venym of the dragoun here morsels. And forthermoreover her misease schal be in defaut of clothing, for thay schul be naked in body, as of clothing, save of fuyr in which thay brenne, and other filthis; and naked schuln thay be of soule, of alle maner vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Wher ben thanne the gaye robes, and the softe scheetis, and the smale schirtes? Lo, what saith of hem the prophete Isaye, under hem schuln be strawed motthis, and here covertours schuln ben of wormes of helle. And forthermorover here disease schal be in defaute of frendes, for he is not povere that hath goode frendes; but here is no frend, for neither God ne no creature schal be frend unto hem, and everich of hem schal hate other with dedly hate. The sones and the doughtres schuln rebellen agayns the fader and the mooder, and kynrede agayns kynrede, and chiden and despisen everich of hem other, bothe day and night, as God saith by the prophete Michias, and the lovyng children that whilom loveden so fleisschlich everych other wolden everych of hem eten other if thay mighten. For how schulden thay loven hem togider in the peyne of helle, whan thay hated everich of hem other in the prosperité of this lif? For trustith wel, her fleisshly love was dedly hate; as saith the prophete David, who so that loveth wickidnes, he hateth his soule, and who so hatith his oughne soule, certis he may love noon other wight in

no manere. And therfore in helle is no solace ne frendschipe, but ever the more flesshly kynredes that ben in helle, the more cursynge, the more chydynges, and the more deedly hate ther is among hem. And fortherover thay schul have defaute of alle manere delices, for certis delices ben the appetites of thy fyve wittes; as sight, hieryng, smellyng, savoring, and touching. But in helle here sight schal be ful of derknes and of smoke, and her eyen[9] ful of teeris; and her hieryng ful of waymentynge, and of gruntynge of teeth, as saith Jhesu Crist, her nosethurles schuln ben ful of stynkyng stynk; and, as saith Ysaye the prophete, here savoringe schal be ful of bitter galle; and touchyng of al here body schal be y-covered with fuyr that never schal quenche, and with wormes that never schuln deyen, as God saith by the mouth of Ysaie. And for al so moche as thay schuln nought wene that thay may deyen for peyne, and by here deth fle fro peyne, that may thay understonde in the word of Job, that saith, ther as is the schadow of deth. Certes a schadow hath the liknesse of the thing of which it is a schadow, but the schadowe is nought the same thing of whiche it is schadowe;[10] right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lik deth, for the horrible anguisshe; and why? for it peyneth hem ever as though men scholden deye anon; but certes thay schul not deye.

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[9] *her eyen.* These words, which seem to give better sense, are adopted from Tyrwhitt; the Harl. MS. reads, *and therfore ful of teeris.*

[10] *but schadowe . . . schadowe.* Omitted in the Harl. MS., and restored from the Lansd. MS.

For as saith seint Gregory, to wrecchid caytifs schal be give deth withoute deth, and ende withouten ende, and defaute withouten faylinge; for here deth schal alway lyven, and here ende schal evermore bygynne, and here defaute schal not fayle. And therfor saith seint Johan the Evaungelist, thay schul folwe deth, and thay schuln nought fynde him, and thay schul desire to deyen, and deth schal flee fro hem. And eek Job saith, that in helle is noon ordre of rule. And al be it that God hath creat al thing in right ordre, and no thing withoute ordre, but alle thinges ben ordeyned and noumbred, yit natheles thay that ben dampned been nought in ordre, ne holden non ordre. For the eorthe schal bere hem no fruyt; (for, as the prophete David saith, God schal destroye the fruyt of the eorthe, as for hem) ne watir schal give hem no moysture, ne the aier non refreisching, ne fuyr no light. For as seith seint Basile, The brennyng of the fuyr of this world schal God give in helle to hem that ben dampnyd, but the light and the clernesse schal be geve in hevene to his children; right as the goode man geve flesch to his children, and bones to his houndes. And for thay schul have noon hope to eschape, saith seint Job atte laste, that ther schal horrour and grisly drede duelle withouten ende. Horrour is alway drede of harm that is to come, and this drede schal ever duelle in the hertes of hem that ben dampnyd. And therfore han thay lorn al here hope for vij. causes. First, for God that is here jugge schal be withoute mercy to hem, ne thay may not please him, ne noon of his halwes; ne they may give no

thing for here raunsoun ; ne thay have no voice to speke to him ; ne thay may not fle fro peyne ; ne thay have no goodnes in hem that thay may schewe to delivere hem fro peyne. And therfore saith Salomon, The wikked man deyeth, and whan he is deed, he schal have noon hope to eschape fro peyne. Who so wolde thanne wel understonde these peynes, bythynke him wel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his synnes, certes he schulde have more talent to sikyn and to wepe, than for to synge or pleye. For as that Salamon saith, Who so that had the science to knowe the peynes that ben establid and ordeynt for synne he wolde make sorwe. Thilke science, as saith seint Austyn, maketh a man to wayment in his herte.

The fourthe poynt, that oughte make a man have contricioun, is the sorwful remembraunce of the good that he hath left to doon heer in eorthe, and eek the good that he hath lorn. Sothly the goode werkes that he hath left, eyther thay been the goode werkes that he wrought er he fel into deedly synne, or elles thai ben the goode werkes that he wroughte whil he lay in synne. Sothly the goode werkes that he dede er he fel into synne ben amortised, and astoneyed, and dullid by ofte synnynge ; that othere goode werkes that he wroughte whil he lay in dedly synne, been outrely deede, as to the lif perdurable in heven.

Thanne thilke goode werkes that ben mortified by ofte synnyng, whiche goode werkes he dede whiles he was in charité, ne mow never quyken agayn withouten verray penitence. And thereof saith God by the mouth of

that if the rightful man retourne agayn fro his right-wisnesse and werke wikkednesse, schal he live? nay; for alle the goode werkes that he hath wrought, ne schuln never be in remembraunce, for he schal dye in his synne. And upon thilke chapitre saith seint Gregory thus, that we schuln understonde this principally, that whan we doon dedly synne, it is for nought thanne to reherse or to drawe into memorie the goode werkes that we han wrought biforn; for certis in the werkyng of the dedly synne, ther is no trust to no good werkes that we han don biforne this tyme; that is to say, as for to have therby the lif perdurable in heven. But natheles, the goode werkes quiken agayn and comen again, and helpen and availen to have the lif perdurable in heven whan we han contricioun; but sothly the goode werkes that men doon whil that thai ben in deedly synne, for as moche as thay were doon in dedly synne, thay may never quyken. For certes, thing that never hadde lif, may never quyken;[11] and al be it so that thay availen not to have the lif perdurable, yit avaylen thay to abrigging of the peyne of helle, or elles to gete temporal riches, or elles that God wol the rather enlumyne and lightene the hert of the synful man to have repentaunce; and eek they availen for to usen a man to do goode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteys Lord Jhesu Crist ne wolde nought no good werk be lost, for in somwhat it schal

[11] *For certes . . . . quyken.* These words, not in the Harl. MS., are added from the Lansd. MS. These omissions are so frequent that I shall not again point them out. English prose manuscripts are always much more incorrect than the verse, from causes which it would not be difficult to explain.

availe. But for als moche as the goode werkes that men don whil thay ben in good lif ben amortised by synne folwyng, and eek sith that alle the goode werkes that men doon whil thay ben in dedly synne, been outrely deede as for to have the lif perdurable, wel may that man, that no goode werkes werkith, synge thilke newe freisch song, *J'ay tout perdu moun temps et moun labour*. For certis synne byreveth a man bothe goodnes of nature, and eek the goodnes of grace. For sothly the grace of the holy gost fareth lik fyre that may not ben ydel; for fuyr as it forletith his werkyng, and faileth anoon, and right so when the grace faileth anoon as it forleteth his werkyng, than lesith the synful man the goodnes of glorie, that oonly is byhight to goode men that labouren and werken. Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to God, as longe as he hath lyved, and eek as longe as he schal lyve, that no goodnes ne hath to paye with his dette to God, to whom he oweth al his lyf; for trusteth wel he schal give accompt, as saith seint Bernard, of alle the goodes that han be geven him in his present lif, and how he hath hem dispendid, nat so moche that ther schal not perische an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an hour ne schal not perische of his tyme, that he ne schal give of it a rekenyng.

The fifte maner of contricioun, that moeveth a man therto, is the remembraunce of the passioun that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us and for oure synnes. For as seith seint Bernard, whil that I lyve, I schal have remembraunce of the passioun that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for us in preching, his werynesse in travayling, his temptacioun whan he fastid, his longe

wakinges whan he prayde, his teeres whan he wepte for pité of good peple; the wo and the schame and the filthe that men saide to him; of the foul spittyng that men spitten on his face; of the buffettis that men gaf him; of the foule mowes and of the reproves that men to him saiden; of the nayles with whiche he was nayled to the cros; and of al the remenaunt of his passioun, that he suffred for my synnes and no thing for his gilt. And ye schal understonde that in mannes synne is every maner ordre of ordinaunce turned up-so-doun. For it is soth, that God, and resoun, and sensualité, and the body of man, be so ordeyned, that everich of thise foure schulde have lordschipe over that other, as thus; God schulde have lordschipe over resoun, and resoun over sensualité, and sensualité over the body of man. But sothly whan man synneth, al this ordre, or ordinaunce, is torned up-so-doun; and thanne, for as moche as the resoun of a man ne wol not be subject ne obeissant to God, that is his lord by right, therfore lesith it the lordschipe that it schulde have over sensualité, and eek over the body of man; and why? for sensualité rebellith thans agayns resoun; and by that way lesith resoun the lordschipe over sensualité, and over the body. For right as resoun is rebel to God, right so is bothe sensualité rebel to resoun and the body also. And certis this disordynaunce, and this rebellioun, oure Lord Jhesu Crist bought upon his precious body ful deere; and herkeneth in which wise. For as moche as resoun is rebel to God, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe, and to be deed. This

suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, after that he was bytraysed of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, so that the blood brast out at every nayl of his hondes, as saith seint Austyn. And fortherover, for as mochil as resoun of man wol nought daunte sensualité whan it may, therfore is man worthy to have schame; and this suffered oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, whan thay spitten in his face. And fortherover thanne, for as moche as the caytif body of man is rebelle bothe to resoun and to sensualité, therfore it is worthy the deth; and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for us upon the croys, wher as ther was no part of his body fre, withoute gret peyne and bitter passioun. And al this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist that never forfeted; and thus sayd he, to mochil am I streyned, for the thinges that I never deservyd; and to moche defouled for schendschip that man is worthy to have. And therfore may the synful man wel seye, as saith seint Bernard, acursed be the bitternesse of my synne, for which ther moste be suffered so moche bitternesse. For certis, after the dyvers discordaunces of oure wickednes was the passioun of oure Lord Jhesu Crist ordeyned in divers thinges; as thus. Certis sinful mannes soule is bytraysid of the devel, by coveitise of temporal prosperité; and scorned by disceyt, whan he cheseth fleischly delytes; and yit is it tormentid by impacience of adversité, and byspit by servage and subjeccioun of synne; and atte last it is slayn finally. For this discordaunce of synful man, was Jhesu Crist first bytraised; and after was he bounde, that com for to unbynden us fro synne and of

peyne. Than was he scorned, that oonly schulde be honoured in alle thing of alle thinges. Than was his visage, that oughte be desired to be say of al mankynde (in which visage aungels desiren to loke) vileynsly byspit. Thanne was he scorned[12] that nothing had agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. Thanne was accomplised the word of Ysaye, He was woundid for oure mysdede, and defouled by oure felonyes. Now sith Jhesu Crist tok upon him thilke peyne of alle oure wikkednes, mochil oughte synful men wepe and bywayle, that for his synnes schulde Goddes sone of hevene al this endure.

The sixte thing that oughte to moeve a man to contricioun, is the hope of thre thinges, that is to sayn, forgevenes of synne, and the gifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of heven, with which God schal guerdoun man for his goode deedis. And for als moche as Jhesu Crist geveth us these giftes of his largesse and of his soverayn bounté, therfore is he cleped, *Jhesus Nazarenus rex Judæorum*. Jhesus is for to say, saveour or savacioun, of whom me schal hope to have forgevenes of synnes, which that is proprely savacioun of synnes. And therfore seyde the aungel to Joseph, thow schalt clepe his name Jhesus, that schal save his poeple of here synnes. And herof saith seint Petir, ther is noon other name under heven, that is geve to any man, by which a man may be savyd, but oonly Jhesus. Nazarenus is as moche to say, as florisching, in which a man schal hope, that he that geveth him remissioun of synnes, schal give him grace

[12] *scorned*. Tyrwhitt reads *scourged* with the Lansd. MS.

wel to doo. For in the flour is hope of fruyt in tyme comynge, and in forgivenes hope of grace wel to do. I was at the dore of thin herte, saith Jhesus, and cleped for to entre; he that openith to me, schal have forgevenes of synne; I wol entre into him by my grace, and soupe with him by the goode workes that he schal doon, whiche werkes ben the foode of God, and he schal soupe with me by the grete joye that I schal give him. Thus schal man hope, that for his werkis of penaunce God schal give him his regne, as he bihetith him in the Gospel.

Now schal man understonde, in what maner schal be his contricioun. I say, it schal be universal and total, this is to say, a man schal be verray repentaunt for alle his synnes, that he hath doon in delyt of his thought, for delit is ful perilous. For ther ben tuo maners of consentyng, that oon of hem is cleped consentyng of affeccioun, whan a man is moeved to synne, and delitith him longe for to thinke on that synne, and his resoun aparceyveth wel that it is synne agayns the lawe of God, and yit his resoun refreyneth not his foule delit or talent, though he seth wel apertly, that it is agenst the reverence of God; although his resoun consente not to do the synne in dede, yit sayn some doctours, delyt that duellith longe it is ful perilous, al be it never so lite. And also a man schulde sorwe, namely for al that he hath desired agayn the lawe of God, with parfyt consentynge of his hert and of his resoun, for therof is no doute, that it is dedly synne in consentyng; for certis ther is no dedly synne, but that

it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delit, and so forth into consentyng, and into dede. Wherfore say I, that many men repente hem never of suche thoughtes and delites, ne never schrive hem of it, but oonly of the dede of grete synnes outward. Wherfore I say, that suche wickid delitis and wickid thoughtes ben subtile bigilours of hem that schuln be dampned. Moreover man oughte to sorwe for his wicked wordes, as wel as his wikked dedes; for certis the repentaunce of a singuler synne, and nought repente of alle his other synnes, or elles repente him of alle his othere synnes, and not of a singuler synne, may nought availe. For certis God Almighty is al good, and therfore he forgeveth al, or elles right nought. And hereof saith seint Augustin, I wot certeynly, that God is enemy to every synnere: and how thanne? he that observith oon synne, schal he have remissioun of the remenant of his other synnes? Nay. And fortherover, contricioun schulde be wounder sorwful and anguisschous, and therfore givith him God pleinly his mercy. And therfore whan my soule was anguissheous withinne me, I hadde remembraunce of God, that my prayer mighte come to him. And fortherover, contricioun moste be continuelly, and that a man have stedefast purpos to schryve him, and for to amende him of his lyf. For sothly, whil contricioun lastith, man may ever hope of forgevenes. And of this cometh hate of synne, that destroyeth synne bothe in himself, and eek in other folk at his power. And therfore saith David, ye that loven God, hatith wikkidnesse;

for trustith wel for to love God, is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

The laste thing that a man schuld understonde in contricioun is this, wherof availith contricioun? I say, that som tyme contricioun delivereth man fro synne; of which that David saith, I say, quod David, I purposid fermely to schryve me, and thou, Lord, relesedist my synne. And right so as contricioun availith nat withoute sad purpos of schrift if man have oportunité, right so litil worth is schrifte or satisfaccioun withoute contricioun. And, moreover, contricioun destruyeth the prisoun of helle, and makith wayk and feble the strengthes of the develes, and restorith the gift of the holy gost, and of alle vertues, and it clensith the soule of synnes, and delivereth the soule fro the peynes of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of synne, and restorith it to alle goodes espirituеles, into the companye and communioun of holy chirche. And fortherover, it makith him that somtyme was sone of ire, to be the sone of grace; and alle these thinges he provith by holy writte. And therfore he that wil sette his herte to these thinges, he were ful wys. For sothly he scholde not thanne in al his lyf have corrage to synne, but given his body and al his herte to the service of Jhesu Crist, and therof do him homage. For certis oure swete Lord Jhesu Crist hath sparid us so debonerly in oure folyes, that if he ne hadde pité of mannes soule, sory songe mighte we alle synge.

Explicit prima pars penitentiæ; et incipit secunda pars ejusdem.

The secounde partye of penitence is confessioun, that is, signe of contricioun. Now schul ye understonde what is confessioun; and whethir it oughte needes be doon or noon; and whiche thinges ben convenable to verray confessioun. First schalt thou understonde, that confessioun is verrey schewyng of synnes to the prest; this is to sayn verray, for he moot schewe him of alle the condiciouns that ben longynge to his synne, as ferforth as he can; al mot be sayd, and nought excused, ne hyd, ne forwrappid; and nought avaunte him of his goode werkis. And forthermore it is necessary to understonde whens that synnes springe, and how thay encresen, and whiche they ben.

Of the springing of synnes as seint Poul saith, in this wise; that right as by a man synne entred first into this world, and thorugh that synne deth, right so thilke deth entred into alle men that synneden; and this man was Adam, by whom that synne entred into this world, whan he brak the comaundement of God. And therfore he that first was so mighty, that he schulde not have deyed, bicam siththe suche on that he moste needis deye, whethir he wolde or noon, and al his progenie that is in this world, that in thilke manner synneden. Loke that in the estate of innocence, whan Adam and Eve nakid were in paradys, and no thing schame ne hadden of her nakidnesse, how that the serpent, that was most wily of alle other bestis that God hadde makid, sayde to the womman, why comaundid God to yow ye schulde nought ete of every tree in Paradys? The womman answerde, of the fruyt, quod she, of the trees in Paradys we feede us, but sothly of the fruyt of the tre that

is in the myddil of Paradis God forbad us for to eten, ne not touche it, lest peraventure we schulde deye. The serpent sayde to the womman, nay, nay, ye schal not drede of deth, for sothe God wot, that what day ye ete therof youre eyen schal open and ye schul ben as goddis, knowing good and harm. The womman saugh the tree was good to feedyng, and fair to the eyen, and delitable to sight; she tok of the fruyt of the tree and eet it, and gaf to hir housbond, and he eet it; and anoon the eyen of hem bothe openeden; and whan that thay knewe that thay were naked, thay sowede of fige leves in maner of breches, to hiden here membirs. Here may ye see, that dedly synne hath first suggestioun of the feend, as scheweth here by the neddir; and aftirward the delit of the fleisch, as scheweth here by Eva; and after that the consentyng of resoun, as schewith by Adam. For trustith wel, though so were that the feende temptid oon, Eve, that is to sayn the fleissch, and the fleissch hadde delit in the beauté of the fruyt defendid, yit certes til that resoun, that is to say, Adam, consentid to the etyng of the fruyt, yit stood he in thastaat of innocence. Of thilk Adam took we thilke synne original; for of him flesschly descendit be we alle and engendrit of vile and corrupt matiere; and whan the soule is put in oure body, right anoon is contract original synne; and that, that was erst but oonly peyne of concupiscence, is afterward bothe peyne and synne; and therefore be we alle i-born sones of wraththe, and of dampnacioun perdurable, if it nere baptisme that we receyven, which bynymeth us the culpe. But forsothe the peyne duellith with us as to temptacioun, which peyne highte concupiscence.

And this concupiscence, whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it makith him to coveyte, by covetise of fleissch, fleisschly synne, by sight of his eyghen, as to erthely thinges, and eek coveityse of heighnesse, as by pride of herte.

Now as to speke of the firste coveitise, that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membris, that weren lawfully maked, and by rightful juggement of God, I say, for as moche as a man is nought obeissant to God, that is his Lord, therfore is fleissch to him disobeisant thurgh concupiscence, which that yit is cleped norissshing of synne, and occasion of synne. Therfore, al the while that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme and moeved in his fleisch to synne. And this may not faile, as longe as he liveth. It may wel wexe feble and faille by vertu of baptisme, and by the grace of God thorugh penitence; but fully schal it never quenche, that he schal somtyme be moeved in himself, but if he were al refreydit by siknes, or by malefice of sorserye, or colde drinkes. For what saith seint Poul? the fleissh coveitith agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the fleisch; thay ben so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may nought alwey do as he wolde. The same seint Poul, after his penaunce, in watir and in lond; in watir by night and by day, in gret peril, and in gret peyne; in lond and in famyne and in thurst, and colde and clothles; oones almost stoned al to the deth; yit saide he, allas! I caytif man, who schal delyvere me fro the prisoun of my caytif body? And seint Jerom, whan he long tyme had woned in desert,

here wher as he hadde no compaignye but of wilde bestes; wher as he hadde no mete but herbes, and water to his drink, ne non bed but the nakid erthe, for which his fleisch was as blak as an Ethiopen, for hete, and neigh destroyed for cold; yit sayde he, that the brennyng of lecchery boylid in al his body. Wherfore I wot wel sicurly that thay be desceyved that say, thay ben not temptid in here body. Witnesse on seint Jame thapostil, that saith, that every wight is tempted in his oughne concupiscence; that is to sayn, that everych of us hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of the norischyng of synne that is in his body. And therfore seint Johan the Evaungelist saith, if that we sayn we be withoute synne, we deceyve ouresilf, and trouthe is nought in us.

Now schal ye understonde in what maner that synne waxith and encresceth in a man. The firste thing is thilke norisching of synne, of which I spak byforn, thilke concupiscence; and after that cometh the suggestioun[13] of the devel, that is to sayn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fuyr of fleisschly concupiscence; and after that a man bythink him whethir he wol don it or non, thilke thing to which he is tempted, And thanne if that a man withstonde and wayve the firste entisynges of his fleisshe, and of the feend, it is no synne; and if so be he do not so, thanne feeleth he anoon a flame of delit, and thanne it is good to be war and kepe him wel, or ellis he wil falle anoon into consentyng of synne, and thanne wol

[13] *suggestioun.* The Harl. MS. reads *subjeccioun.*

he do it, if he may have tyme, and space, and place. And of this matere saith Moyses by the devel, in this maner; the feend saith, I wol chace and pursewe the man by wickid suggestiouns, and I wil hent him by moevyng and steryng of synne, and I wil parte my prise, or my pray, by deliberacioun, and my lust schal be accomplisit in delit; I wil drawe my sword in consentynge; (for certes, right as a swerd departith a thing in tuo parties, right so consentynge departeth God fro man; and thanne wol I sle him with my hond in dede of synne. Thus saith the feend; for certis, thanne is a man al deed in soule; and thus is synne accomplisid, by temptacioun, by delit, and by consentyng; and thanne is the synne cleped actuel.

For sothe synne is in two maneres, outher it is venial, or dedly synne. Sothly, whan man lovith any creature more than Jhesu Crist oure creatour, thanne it is dedly synne; and venial synne is, if a man love Jhesu Crist lesse than him oughte. For sothe the dede of this venial synne is ful perilous, for it amenisith the love that men schulde have to God, more and more. And therfore if a man charge more himself with many suche venial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som tyme discharge him of hem by schrifte, thay may ful lightly amenise in him al the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and in this wise skippith venial into dedly synne. For certes, the more that a man chargith his soule with venial synnes, the more is he enclyned to falle in deedly synne. And therfore let us nought be negligent to descharge us of venial synnes.

For the proverbe saith, that many smale makith a gret. And herken this ensample; a greet wawe of the see cometh som tyme with so gret a violence, that it drenchith the schip; and the same harm doon som tyme smale droppis of watir, that entrith thurgh a litil creves into the thurrok, and into the bothum of a schip, if men be so negligent, that thay descharge hit nought by tyme. And therfore, although ther be difference betueen these tuo causes of drenching, algates the schip is dreynt. Right so farith it som tyme of deedly synne, and of anoyous venial synnes, whan thay multiplien in a man so gretly, that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth, thurgh which he sinneth venially, is as gret in his herte as the love of God, or more. And therfore the love of every thing that is not byset in God, ne doon principally for Goddes sake, although a man love it lasse than God, yit is it venial synne; and deedly synne, whan the love of eny thing weyeth in the hert of a man, as moche as the love of God, or more. Dedly synne is, as saith seint Austyn, whan man torneth his hert from God, which that is verray soverayn bounté, that may not chaunge and flitte, and give his herte to a thing that may chaunge and flitte; and certes, that is every thing save God of heven. For sothe, if that a man gieve his love, the which that he owith to God with al his herte, unto a creature, certes, as moche of love as he giveth to thilke creature, so moche he reveth fro God, and therfore doth he synne, for he that is dettour to God, ne yeldeth not to God al his dette, that is to sayn, al the love of his hert.

Now siththe man understondith generally which is venial synne, thanne is it covenable to telle specially of synnes, whiche that many a man peraventure ne demith hem no synnes, and schryveth him not of the same thinges, and yit natheles thay ben synnes; and, sothly, as clerkes writen; this is to say, at every tyme that man etith or drinkith more than suffiseth to the sustienaunce of his body, in certeyn he doth synne; and eek whan he spekith more than it needith, he doth synne; and eek whan he herkeneth nought benignely the pleynt of the pore; eek whan he is in hele of body, and wil not faste whan other folk fasten, withouten cause resonable; eek whan he slepith more than needith, or whan he cometh by thilk enchesoun to late to holy chirche, or to other werkes of charité; eke whan he useth his wyf withoute soverayn desir of engendrure, to thonour of God, and for thentent to yelde his wyf the dette of his body; eek whan he wil not visite the sike, and the prisoner, if he may; eek if he love wyf, or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requireth; eek if he flatere or blaundisshe more than him oughte for eny necessité; eek if a man menuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povere; eek if he apparaylith his mete more deliciously than it nedith, or ete it to hastily by licouresnes; eek if he talke of vanitees at chirche, or at Goddis service, or that he be a talkere of ydil wordes of vanité or of vilonye, for he schal yelde of hem acount at the day of doome; eek whan he heetith or assureth to do thinges that he may nought performe; eek whan that by lightnes or foly

he myssaith or scorneth his neighebor; eek whan he hath eny wicked suspeccioun of thing, that he wot of it no sothfastnesse: these thinges and mo withoute nombre ben synnes, as saith seint Austyn. Now schal men understonde, that al be it so that noon erthely man may eschiewe alle venial synnes, yit may he refreyne hem by the brennyng love that he hath to oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and by prayeres, and by confessioun, and other goode werkes, so that it schal but litil greve. For, as saith seint Austyn, gif a man love God in such a maner, that al that ever he doth is in the love of God, or for the love of God verraily, for he brenneth in the love of God, loke how moche that a drope of watir, that fallith in a furneys ful of fuyr, annoyeth or greveth the brenning of the fire, so moche in like maner annoyeth or greveth a venial synne unto a man that is perfyt in the love of Jhesu Crist. Men may also refreyne venial synne, by receyvyng of the precious body of Jhesu Crist; by receyvyng eek of holy water; by almes dede; by general confessioun of *Confiteor* at masse, and at prime, and at complyn; and by blessing of bisschops and of prestes, and by other goode werkis.

Now it is bihovely thing to telle whiche ben dedly synnes, that is to sayn, chiveteyns of synnes; for as moche as alle thay renne in oon loos, but in divers maners. Now ben thay cleped chiveteyns, for als moche as thay ben chief and springers of all othere synnes. The roote of these seven synnes thanne is pride, the general synne and roote of alle harmes. For of this roote springen general braunches; as ire,

envye, accidie or sleuthe, avarice or coveitise (to commune understondynge), glotonye, and leccherie: and everich of these synnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as schal be declarid in here chapitres folwinge.

De superbia.

And though so be, that no man can telle utterly the nombre of the twigges, and of the harm that cometh of pride, yit wol I schewe a party of hem, as ye schul understonde. Ther is inobedience, avauntyng, ypocrisye, despit, arragaunce, impudence, swellyng of hert, insolence, elacioun, impacience, strif, contumacie, presumpcion, irreverence, pertinacie, veinglorie, and many another twigge that I can not telle ne declare. Inobedient is he that disobeieth for despyt to the comaundementz of God, and to his sovereigns, and to his gostly fader. Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bounté that he hath don. Ypocrisy, is that hydeth to schewe him such as he is, and scheweth him such as he not is. Despitous, is he that hath desdayn of his neighebour, that is to say, of his even Cristen, or hath despit to doon that him ought to doon. Arragaunt, is he that thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him, that he hath not, or weneth that he schulde have hem by desert, or elles he demeth that he is that he is not. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no schame of his synne. Swellyng of hert, is whan a man rejoysith him of harm that he hath don. Insolent, is he that dispisith in his juggement alle other folk, as to regard of his valieu, and of his connyng, and of his spekyng, and of his beryng. Elacioun, is whan he

may never suffre to have maister ne felawe. Impacient, is he that wil not ben i-taught ne undernome of his vices, and by stryf werreth trouthe witynge, and defendeth his folie. Contimax, is he that thorugh his indignacioun is agains everych auctorité or power of hem that been his soverayns. Presumpcioun, is whan a man undertakith and emprisith that him oughte not to do, or elles that he may not doo, and that is cleped surquidrye. Irreverence, is whan men doon not honour ther as hem ought to doon, and wayteth to be reverenced. Pertinacie, is whan man defendith his folye, and trusteth to moche to his owne witte. Vainglorie, is for to have pomp, and delit in temporal heighnes, and glorifie him in wordly estaat. Jangelyng, is whan a man spekith to moche biforn folk, and clappith as a mille, and taketh no keep what he saith.

And yit is ther a privé spice of pride, that wayteth first to be saluet er he saliewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, paradventure; and eek wayteth or desireth to sitte above him, or to go above him in the way, or kisse the pax, or ben encensed, or gon to the offringe biforn his neighebore, and suche semblable thinges, agains his dueté peraventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente, in such a proud desir to be magnified and honoured toforn the poeple.

Now ben there tuo maners of pride; that oon is heighnes withinne the hert of a man, and that other is withoute. Of which sothly these forsayde thinges, and mo than I have said, aperteynen to pride that is in the hert of a man; and that other spices of pride ben withoute; but natheles, that oon of thise spices of

pride is signe of that other, right as the gay levesselle at the taverne is signe of wyn that is in the celer. And this is in many thinges; as in speche and contienaunce, and in outrageous array of clothing. For certis, if ther hadde be no synne in clothing, Crist wolde not so soone have notid and spoke of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel. And seint Gregorie saith, that precious clothing is coupable for derthe of it, and for his schortnes,[14] and for his straungenes and disgisines, and for the superfluité, or for the inordinat skantnes of it; allas! many man may sen as in oure dayes, the synful costlewe array of clothing, and namely in to moche superfluité, or elles in to disordinat skantnes.

As to the firste synne in superfluité of clothing, which that makid is so dere, to harm of the poeple, not oonly the cost of embrowdyng, the guyse, endentyng or barryng, swandyng, palyng, or bendyng,[15] and semblable wast of cloth in vanité; and ther is also costlewe furring in here gownes, so mochil pounsyng of chiseles to make holes, so moche daggyng of scheris, for with the superfluité in lengthe of the forsaide gownes, traylinge in the donge and in the myre, on hors and eek on foote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke traylyng is verraily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, thredbare, and rotyn with donge, rather than it is geven to the pore, to gret damage of the forsaide pore folk, and that

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[14] *schortnes*. So the Harl. MS.; Tyrwhitt reads *softnesse*.

[15] *the guyse endentyng . . . or bending*. In Tyrwhitt this passage stands thus, *the disguising, endenting, or barring, ounding, paling, winding, or bending*.

in sondry wise; this is to sain, the more that cloth is wastid, the more most it coste to the poeple for the scarsenes; and forthermore, if it so be that thay wolde give suche pounsed and daggid clothing to the pore folk, it is not convenient to were to the pore folk, ne suffisaunt to beete here necessité, to kepe hem fro the desperance of the firmament. Upon that other syde, to speke of the horrible disordinat scantnes of clothing, as ben these cuttid sloppis or anslets,[16] that thurgh her schortnes ne covereth not the schamful membre of man, to wickid entent; alas! som men of hem schewen the schap and the boce of the horrible swollen membres, that semeth like to the maledies of hirnia, in the wrapping of here hose, and eek the buttokes of hem, that faren as it were the hinder part of a sche ape in the fulle of the moone. And moreover the wrecchid swollen membres that thay schewe thurgh desgysyng, in departyng of here hoses in whyt and reed, seemith that half the schameful privé membres were flayn. And if it so be that thay departe here hosen in other colours, as is whit and bliew, or whit and blak, or blak and reed, and so forth; thanne semith it, as by variaunce of colour, that half the party of his privy membris ben corrupt by the fuyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or other such meschaunce. And yit of the hynder partye of here buttokes it is ful horrible for to see, for certis in that partie of here body ther as thay purgen her stynkyng ordure, that foule party schewe thay to the poeple proudly in despyt of honesté, which

[16] *anslets.* Tyrwhitt reads with the Lansd. MS. *hanselines.*

honesté that Jhesu Crist and his frendes observeden to schewen in his lif. Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, God wot, that though the visage of some of hem seme ful chaste and debonaire, yit notifye thay, in here array of attyre, licorousnesse and pride. I say not that honesté in clothing of man or womman is uncovenable, but certis the superfluité or disordinat skantnes of clothing is reprevable. Also the synne of here ornament, or of apparaile, as in thinges that aperteynen to rydyng, as in to many delicat horses, that ben holden for delyt, that thay ben so faire, fat, and costlewe; and also in many a vicious knave, mayntened bycause of hem; and in to curious harnoys, as in sadelis, and bridlis, cropours, and peytrelle, covered with precious clothing, and riche barres and plates of gold and of silver. For whiche God saith by Zacharie the prophete, I wol confounde the ryders of suche horsis. These folk take litil reward of the ryding of Goddes sone of heven, and of his harneys, whan he rode upon an asse, and hadde noon other harneys but the clothing of his disciples newe. Ne rede I not that ever he rode on other beest. I speke this for the synne of superfluité, and nought for resonable honesté, whan resoun it requirith. And fortherover, certes pride is gretly notified in holdyng of gret meyné, whan thay ben of litil profyt or of right no profyt, and namely whan that meyné is felenous and daungerous to the poeple by hardynesse of lordschipe, or by way of offices; for certes, suche lordes selle thanne here lordschipe to the devel of helle, whan thay susteyne the

wickidnes of here meyné. Or elles, whan these folk of lowe degré, as is thilke that holden hostilries, and susteyne the thefte of here hostilers, and that is in many maneres of disceytes; thilke maner of folk ben the flyes that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the carayn. Suche forsayde folk strangelen spirituelly here lordschipes; for whiche thus saith David the prophete, wikked deth moot come upon suche lordschipes, and God geve that thay moot descende into helle adoun; for in here houses ben iniquités and schrewednesses, and not God of heven. And certes, but thay do amendement, right so as Jacob gaf his benisoun to Laban by the service of God, and to Pharao by the service of Joseph, right so God wil geve his malisoun to suche lordschipes as susteynen the wikkednes of her servauntes, but thay come to amendement.

Pride of the table apperith ful ofte; for certes riche men ben cleped to feste, and pore folk ben put away and rebuked; also in excesse of divers metis and drinkis, and namely of suche maner of bake metis and dische metis brennyng of wilde fuyr, and peynted and castelid with papire, and semblable wast, so that it is abusioun for to thinke. And eek in greet preciousnes of vessel, and in curiousnesse of vessel, and of mynstralcye, by the whiche a man is stired the more to delitis of luxurie, if so be that thay sette her herte the lasse upon oure Lord Jhesu Crist, certeyn it is a synne; and certeinly the delites mighte be so grete in this caas, that men mighte lightly falle by hem into dedly synne. The espices that sourdren of pride, sothely

whan thay sourdren of malice y-magined and avised, aforn cast, or elles of usage, ben dedly synnes, it is no doute. And whan thay sourden by frelté unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawe agayn, al be thay grevous synnes, I gesse thay ben not dedly. Now mighte men axe, wherof pride sourdeth and springeth. I say som tyme it springith of the goodes of nature, and som tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som tyme of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden outher in goodes of body, or goodes of soule. Certis, the goodes of the body ben hele of body, strengthe, deliverance,[17] beauté, gentrie, fraunchise; the goodes of nature of the soule ben good wit, scharp understondyng, subtil engyn, vertu naturel, good memorie; goodes of fortune been richesses, highe degrees of lordschipes, and preisyng of the poeple: goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spirituel travaile, benignité, vertuous contemplacioun, withstondyng of temptacioun, and semblable thinges: of whiche forsayde goodes, certes it is a ful gret foly, a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. Now as for to speke of goodes of nature, God wot that som tyme we have hem in nature as moche to oure damage as to oure profit. As for to speke of hele of body, certes it passith ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of the siknesse of the soule. For God wot, the fleissch is a gret enemy to the soule; and therfore the more that oure body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle. Eke for to pride him in his strengthe of body, it is a foly; for certes the

[17] *deliverance.* Tyrwhitt reads *delivernesse.*

fleisch coveytith again the spirit; and ay the more strong that the fleisch is, the sorier may the soule be; and over al, this strengthe of body and worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte many man peril and meschaunce. Eek for to pride him of his gentrie is ful gret folye: for often tyme the gentrie of the body bynymeth the gentery of the soule; and we ben alle of oon fader and of oon moder; and alle we ben of oon nature roten and corrupt, bothe riche and pore. For sothe oon maner gentry is for to prayse, that apparailleth mannes corrage with vertues and moralitees, and makith him Cristes child; for trustith wel, over what man that synne hath maistry, he is a verray cherl to synne.

Now ben ther general signes of gentilesse; as schewyng of vice and rybaudrie, and servage of synne, in word, in werk and contenaunce, and usinge vertu, curtesie, and clennes, and to be liberal; that is to sayn, large by mesure; for thilke that passith mesure, is foly and synne. And another is to remembre him of bounté that he of other folk hath resceyved. Another is to be benigne to his goode subjectis; wherfore, as saith Senek, ther is nothing more covenable to a man of heigh estate, than debonairté and pité; and therfore thise flies that men clepen bees, whan thay make here king, thay chesen oon than hath no pricke wherwith he may stynge. Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to atteigne to hihe vertuous thinges. Certis, also who that prideth him in the goodes of grace, is eek an outrageous fool; for thilke giftes of grace that schulde have i-torned him to

goodnes and medicyne, torneth him to venym and to confusioun, as saith seint Gregory. Certis also, who that pridith him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful gret fool; for som tyme is a man a gret lord by the morwe, that is a caytif and a wrecche er it be night: and som tyme the riches of a man is cause of his deth: and som tyme the delice of a man is cause of his grevous maledye, thurgh which he deieth. Certis, the commendacioun of the poeple is som tyme ful fals and ful brutil for to truste; this day thay prayse, to morwe thay blame. God woot, desir to have commendacioun of the poeple hath causid deth of many a busy man.

Remedium contra superbiam.

Now sith so is, that ye han herd and understonde what is pride, and whiche ben the spices of it, and whens pride sourdeth and springeth; now schul ye understonde which is the remedy agayns pride; and that is humilité or meekenes, that is a vertue thurgh which a man hath verray knowleche of himself, and holdith of himself no pride, ne pris, ne deynté, as in regard of his desertes, considering evermore his frelté. Now ben ther thre maners of humilité; as humilité in hert, another is humilité in his mouth, the thridde in workes. The humilité in his herte is in foure maners; that oon is, whan a man holdith himself not worth biforn God of heven; another is, whan he despiseth no man; the thrid is, whan he ne rekkith nought though a man holde him nought worth; the ferthe is, whan he holdeth him nought sory of his humiliacioun. Also the humilité

of mouth is in foure thinges; in attempre speche; in humbles of speche; and whan he byknowith with his owne mouth, that he is such as him thenkith that he is in herte; another is, whan he praisith the bounté of another man and nothing therof amenusith. Humilité eek in werk is in foure maneres. The first is, whan he puttith other men tofore him; the secounde is, to chese the lowest place over al; the thrid is, gladly to assente to good counseil; the ferthe is, gladly to stonde to thaward of his sovereyns, or of him that is in heigher degré; certeyn this is a gret werk of humilité.

De invidia.

After pride now wol I speke of the foule synne of envye, which that is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of other mennes prosperité; and after the word of seint Austyn, is it sorwe of other mennes wele, and joye of other mennes harm. This foule synne is platly agayns the Holy Gost. Al be it so, that every synne is agayn the Holy Gost, yit natheles, for as moche as bounté aperteyneth proprely to the Holy Gost, and envye proprely is malice, therfore is it proprely agayns the bounté of the Holy Gost. Now hath malice tuo spices, that is to sayn, hardnes of hert in wickednes, or ellis the fleisch of man is so blynd, that he considereth not that he is in synne, or rekketh not that he is in synne; which is the hardnes of the devyl. That other spice of envye is, whan a man warieth trouthe, and wot that it is trouthe, and eek whan he warieth the grace that God hath geve to his neighebor; and al

this is by envye. Certes than is envye the worste synne that is; for sothely alle other synnes ben somtyme oonly agains oon special vertu; but certes envye is agayns alle vertues and agayns al goodnes; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighebor; and in this maner it is divers from all the synnes; for wel unnethe is ther any synne that it ne hath som delit in itself, sauf oonly envye, that ever hath in itself anguisch and sorwe. The spices of envye ben these. Ther is first sorwe of other mennes goodnes and of her prosperité; and prosperité is kyndely matier of joye; thanne is envye a synne agayns kynde. The secounde spice of envye is joye of other mennes harm; and that is proprely lik to the devyl, that ever rejoyeth him of mennes harm. Of these tuo spices cometh bacbityng; and this synne of bakbytyng or detraccioun hath certein spices, as thus: som man praiseth his neighebor by a wickid entent, for he makith alway a wickid knotte atte last ende; alway he makith a *but* at the last ende, that is thing of more blame, than worth is al the praysing. The secounde spice is, that if a man be good, and doth or saith a thing to good entent, the bacbiter wol torne al thilke goodnes up-so-doun to his schrewed entent. The thridde is to amenuse the bounté of his neighebor. The ferthe spiece of bakbytyng is this, that if men speke goodnes of a man, than wil the bakbiter seyn, "Parfay, yit such a man is bet than he;" in dispraysynge of him that men praise. The fifte spice is this, for to consente gladly and herken gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This synne is ful gret, and

ay encresith after thentent of the bakbiter. After bakbytyng cometh grucching or murmuracioun, and som tyme it springith of impacience[18] agayns God, and somtyme agains man. Agayns God is it whan a man grucchith agayn the pyne of helle, or agayns poverte, or of losse of catel, or agayns reyn or tempest, or elles grucchith that schrewes han prosperité, or ellis that goode men han adversité; and alle these thinges schulde men suffre paciently, for thay come by rightful juggement and ordinaunce of God. Som tyme cometh grucching of avarice, as Judas grucched agens the Maudeleyn, whan sche anoynted the hed of oure Lord Jhesu Crist with hir precious oynement. This maner murmur is swich as whan man grucchith of goodnes that himself doth, or that other folk doon of here owne catel. Som tyme cometh murmur of pride, as whan Symon the Pharisé grucchid agayn the Maudeleyn, whan sche approchid to Jhesu Crist and wepte at his feet for hir synnes; and somtyme it sourdith of envye, whan men discoveren a mannes harm that was privé, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. Murmuryng eek is ofte among servauntz, that grucchen whan here soverayns bidden hem to doon leeful thinges; and for as moche as thay dar nought openly withstonde the comaundementz of here soverayns, yit wol thay sayn harm and grucche and murmure prively for verray despit; whiche wordes men clepe the develes Pater noster, though so be that the devel hadde never Pater noster, but that lewed men calle it so. Som tyme it

[18] *impacience*. The Harl. MS. reads *insapiens*.

cometh of ire of privé hate, that norischeth rancour in herte, as after-ward I schal declare. Thanne cometh eek bitternes of herte, thorugh which bitternesse every good deede of his neighebore semeth to him bitter and unsavery. But thanne cometh discord that unbyndeth alle maner of frendschipe. Thanne cometh scornynge of his neighebor, al do he never so wel. Thanne cometh accusyng, as whan man seketh occasioun to annoyen his neighebore, which that is lik the craft of the devel, that waytith both night and day to accuse us alle. Thanne cometh malignité, thurgh which a man annoyeth his neighebor prively if he may, and if he may not, algate his wikked wille schal nought wante, as for to brenne his hous prively, or empoysone him, or sleen his bestis prively, and semblable thinges.

Remedium contra invidiam.

Now wol I speke of the remedies agayns thise foule things and this foule synne of envye. First is the love of God principal, and lovynge of his neighebor as himself; sothely that oon ne may nought ben withoute that other. And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebour thou schalt understonde the name of thy brother; for certes alle we have oon fader fleisschly, and oon mooder, that is to sain, Adam and Eva; and eek oon fader spirituel, and that is God of heven. Thy neighebor artow holden for to love, and wilne him al godenesse, and therfore saith God, love thy neighebor as thyself; that is to sayn, bothe to savacioun of lif and of soule. And moreover thou schalt love him in word, and in benigne

amonestyng and chastising, and comforte him in his annoyes, and praye for him with al thin herte. And in dede thou schalt love him in such wise that thou schalt do to him in charité, as thou woldist it were doon to thin oughne persone; and therfore thou schalt doon him noon harme in wikked word, ne damage him in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, by wicked entising of ensample. Thou schalt nought desiren his wif, ne noone of his thinges. Understonde eek that in the name of neighebor is comprehendid his enemy; certes man schal love his enemy by the comaundement of God, and sothly thy frend schalt thou love in God. I sayde thin enemy schaltow love for Goddes sake, by his comaundement; for if it were resoun that man schulde hate his enemy, for sothe God nolde nought receyve us to his love that ben his enemyes. Agains thre maner of wronges, that his enemy doth to him, he schal do thre things, as thus: agayns hate and rancour of herte, he schal love him in herte; agayns chydyng and wicked wordes, he schal pray for his enemye; agains wikked dede of his enemy, he schal doon him bounté. For Crist saith, loveth youre enemyes, and prayeth for hem that speke you harme, and for hem that yow chacen and pursewen; and doth bounté to hem that yow haten. Lo, thus comaundeth us oure Lord Jhesu Crist to do to oure enemyes; for sothely nature driveth us to love oure frendes, and parfay oure enemyes han more neede to love than oure frendes. For sothely to hem that more neede have, certis to hem schul men do goodnes. And certis in thilke dede have

we remembraunce of the love of Jhesu Crist that dyed for his enemys. And in als moche as thilke love is more grevous to parforme, so moche is the more gret remedye and meryt, and therfore the lovyng of oure enemy hath confoundid the venym of the devel; for right as the devel is confoundid by humilité, right so is he woundid to the deth by love of oure enemy. Certes thanne is love the medicine that castith out the venym of envye fro mannes hert. The spices of this part schuln be more largely declared in here chapitres folwynge.

De ira.

After envye wol I descryven the synne of ire; for sothely who so hath envye upon his neighebor, anoon he wol comunly fynde him a matiere of wraththe in word or in dede agayns him to whom he hath envie. And as wel cometh ire of pride as of envye, for sothly he that is proud or envyous is lightly wroth. This synne of ire, after the descryvyng of seint Austyn, is wikked wille to ben avengid by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosofer, is the fervent blood of man i-quiked in his hert, thurgh which he wolde harm to him that him hatith; for certes the hert of man by eschawfyng and moevyng of his blood waxith so trouble, that he is out of alle juggements of resoun. But ye schal understonde that ire is in tuo maneres, that oon of hem is good, that other is wikked. The goode ire is by jalousy of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wroth with wikkidnes and agayn wikkednesse. And therfore saith a

wise man, that ire is bet than play. This ire is with deboneirté, and it is wroth without bitternes; not wroth with the man, but wroth with the mysdedes of the man; as saith the prophet David, *Irascimini, et nolite peccare, etc.* Now understonde that wikked ire is in tuo maners, that is to sayn, sodeyn ire or hastif ire withoute avysement and consenting of resoun; the menynge and the sentence of this is, that the resoun of a man ne consentith not to thilke sodein ire, and thanne is it venial. Another ire is ful wicked, that cometh of felony of herte, avysed and cast biforn, with wickid wille to do vengeaunce, and therto his resoun consentith; and sothely this is deedly synne. This ire is so displesaunt to God, that it troublith his hous, and chaceth the holy Gost out of mannes soule, and wastith and destroyeth that liknes of God, that is to say, the vertu that is in mannes soule, and put in him the likenes of the devel, and bynymeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel, for it is the develes fornays that is eschaufid with the fuyr of helle. For certes right so as fuyr is more mighty to destroye erthely thinges, than eny other element, right so ire is mighty to destroye alle spirituel thinges. Loke how that fuyr of smale gledis, that ben almost dede under asshen, wolden quiken agayn whan thay ben touched, with brimstone, right so ire wol evermore quyken agayn, whan it is touched by pride that is covered in mannes herte. For certes fuyr may nought come out of no thing, but if it were first in the same thinge, naturelly; as fuyr is drawe

out of flintes with steel. Right so as pride is often tyme mater of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as saith seint Isidor, that whan men maken fuyr of thilke tree, and cover the colis with asshen, sothly the fuyr of it wol lasten al a yer or more; and right so fareth it of rancour, whan it oones is conceyved in the hertis of som men, certein it wol lasten fro oon Estren day until another Ester day, and more. But certis thilke man is ful fer from the mercy of God al thilke while.

In this forsaide develes fornays ther forgen thre schrewes; pride, that ay blowith and encresith the fuyr by chidyng and wickid wordis; thanne stont envye, and holdeth the hoote iren upon the hert of man, with a paire of longe tonges of rancour; and thanne stont the sinne of contumelie or strif and cheste, and baterith and forgeth by vileyns reprevynges. Certes this cursed synne annoyeth bothe to the man himsilf, and eek to his neighebor. For sothely almost al the harm that eny man doth to his neighebour cometh thurgh wraththe. For certis, outrageous wraththe doth al that ever the devyl him comaundeth; for he ne spareth neyther for our Lord Jhesu Crist, ne his moodir; and in his outrageous anger and ire, allas! ful many oon at that tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist, and eek of alle his halwes. Is nat this a cursed vice? Yis, certis. It bynymeth fro man his witte and his resoun, and al his deboneire lyf spirituel, that scholde kepen his soule. Certes it bynymeth eek Goddis dewe lordschipe (and that is mannes soule) and the love of his

neighebor; it stryveth eek alday agayns trouthe; it reveth him eek the quiete of his hert, and subvertith his herte and his soule.

Of ire cometh these stynkynge engendrures; first, hate, that is old wraththe; discord, thurgh which a man forsakith his olde frend that he hath loved ful longe; and thanne cometh werre, and every maner of wronge that man doth to his neighebor in body or in catel. Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel that homicidie (that is, manslaughter) is in divers wise. Som maner of homicidie is spirituel, and som is bodily. Spirituel manslaughter is in sixe thinges. First, by hate, as saith seint Johan, he that hateth his brother, is an homicide. Homicide is eek by bakbytyng, of whiche bakbiters saith Salomon, that thay have twaye swerdes with whiche thay slen here neighebors; for sothely as wikke is to bynyme his good name as his lif. Homicidy is eek in gevyng of wikkid counseil by fraude, as for to geve counseil to areyse wicked and wrongful custumes and taliages; of whiche saith Salomon, a leoun roryng and bere hungry ben like to the cruel lordschipes, in withholdyng or abrigging of the schipe or the hyre or the wages of servauntes, or ellis in usure, or in withdrawyng of almes of pore folk. For whiche the wise man saith, feedith him that almost dyeth for hunger, for sothely but if thou feede him thou slest him. And eek these ben dedly synnes. Bodily manslaughter is, whan thou sleest him with thy tonge in other manere, as whan thou comaundist to slen a man, or elles givest counseil to slee

a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe, right as a justice dampnith him that is coupable to the deth; but let the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nought for delit to spille blood, but for keping of rightwisnes. Another homicidy is doon for necessitè, as whan a man sleth another him defendaunt, and that he ne may noon other wise eschape fro his owen deth; but certeynly, if he may escape withoute slaughter of his adversarie, and sleth him, he doth synne, and he schal bere penaunce as for dedly synne. Eek if a man by caas or adventure schete an arwe or cast a stoon, with which he sleth a man, he is an homicide. Eke if a womman by negligence overlye hir child in hir sleping, it is homicide and deedly synne. Eke whan man distourbith concepcioun of a child, and makith a womman outher bareyn by drinke of venenous herbis, thurgh whiche sche may nought conceyve, or sleth hir child by drynkes, or elles putteth certeyn material thinges in hir secrè place to slee the child, or elles doth unkyndely synne, by which man, or womman, schedith here nature in manne or in place ther as the child may nought be conceyved; or ellis if a womman have conceyved, and hurt hirself, and sleth the child, yit is it homycidie. What say we eek of wommen that mordren here children for drede of worldly schame? Certes, it is an horrible homicidy. Eek if a man approche to a womman by desir of lecchery, thurgh the which the child is perischt; or elles smitith a womman wytyngly, thurgh which sche sleeth hir child; alle these ben homicides, and horrible dedly synnes. Yit cometh

ther of ire many mo synnes, as wel in word, as in werk and thought; as he that arettith upon God, and blamith God of thing of which he is himself gulty, or despisith God and alle his halwes, as doon these cursed hasardours in divers cuntrees. This cursed synne don thay, whan thay felen in here herte ful wickidly of God and his halwes. Also whan thay treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter, thilke synne is so gret, that unnethe may it be relessed, but that the mercy of God passith alle his werkes, and is so gret and so benigne. Thanne cometh of ire attry anger, whan a man is scharply amonested in his schrifte to forlete synne, thanne wol he be angry, and answere hokerly and angrily, to defenden or excusen his synne by unstedefastnesse of his fleisch; or elles he dede it to holde companye with his felawes; or ellis he saith the fend entised him; or elles he dide it for his youthe; or ellis his complexioun is so corrageous that he may not forbere; or ellis it is desteny, as he saith, unto a certeyn age; or elles he saith it cometh him of gentilesce of his auncetrie, and semblable thinges. Alle these maner of folk so wrappen hem in here synnes, that thay wol nought deliver hemself. For sothely, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his synne, may nought be delivered of his synne, til that he mekely biknoweth his synne. After this thanne cometh sweryng, that is expres agayns the comaundementz of God; and this bifallith often of angir and of ire. God saith, thou schalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vayn or in ydil. Also, oure Lord Jhesu Crist saith by the word of seint Mathew, ne

schal ye not swere in alle manere, neither by heven, for it is Goddes trone, ne by the eorthe, for it is the benche of his feet, ne by Jerusalem, for it is the cité of a gret king, ne by thin heed, for thou may nought make an her whit ne blak; but sayeth, by youre word, ye, ye, and nay, nay; and what it is more, it is of evel. Thus saith Jhesu Crist. For Cristes sake, swereth not so synfully, in dismembring of Crist, by soule, herte, boones, and body; for certes it semeth, that ye thenke that cursed Jewes ne dismembrit nought y-nough the precious persone of Crist, but ye dismembre him more. And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne reule yow after the lawe of God in youre swering, as saith Jeremie, c°. iiij°. Thou schalt kepe thre condiciouns, thou schalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnes. This is to sayn, thou schalt swere soth; for every lesyng is agayns Crist; for Crist is verray trouthe. And think wel this, that every gret swerer, not compellid lawfully to swere, the wounde[19] schal not departe fro his hous, whil he useth such unleful swerinye. Thou schalt eek swere in doom, whan thou art constreigned by thy domesman to witnesse the trouthe. Eek thou schalt not swere for envye, ne for favour, ne for meede, but oonly for rightwisnesse, and for declaring of it to the worschip of God, and helping of thin even cristen. And therfore every man that takith Goddes name in ydil, or falsly swerith with his mouth, or elles takith on him the name of Crist, and callith himself a cristen man, and lyveth agayn Cristes lyvyng and his

[19] *wounde.* Tyrwhitt reads *plage;* the Harl. MS. reads *wonder.*

teching, alle thay take Goddes name in ydel. Loke eek what saith seint Peter, *Act. c°. iiij°. Non est aliud nomen sub cælo, etc.*; There is noon other name, saith seint Peter, under heven ne geven to noon men, in which thay mowe be saved, that is to sayn, but in the name of Jhesu Crist. Tak heede eek how precious is the name of Crist, as saith seint Poule, *ad Philippenses ij°. In nomine Jhesu, etc.* that in the name of Jhesu every kne of hevenly creatures, or erthely, or of helle, schulde bowe; for it is so heigh and so worschipful, that the cursed feend in helle schulde tremble to heeren it nempned. Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that thay despise it more boldely[20] than dede the cursed Jewes, or elles the devel, that tremblith whan he heerith his name.

Now certis, sith that swering (but if it be lawfully doon) is so heihly defendid, moche wors is forswering falsely, and yit needeles.

What say we eek of hem that deliten hem in swering, and holden it a gentery or manly dede to swere grete othis? And what of hem that of verray usage ne cessen nought to swere grete othis, al be the cause not worth a strawe? Certes this is horrible synne. Swerynge sodeynly without avysement is eek a gret synne. But let us now go to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuracioun and conjuracioun, as doon these false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacines ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle,[21] or in a fuyr, or in the schulder bon of a scheep; I can

[20] *boldely*. The Harl. MS reads *bodyly*.
[21] *cercle*. The Harl. MS. reads *in a churche*.

not sayn, but that thay doon cursedly and dampnably agains Crist, and the faith of holy chirche.

What say we of hem that bilieven on divinailes, as by flight or by nois of briddes or of bestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores or crakking of howses, by gnawyng of rattis, and such maner wrecchidnes? Certis, al this thing is defended by God and holy chirche, for whiche thay ben accursed, til thay come to amendement, that on such filthe bisetten here bileeve. Charmes for woundes or malady of men or of bestes, if thay take eny effect, it may be peradventure that God suffreth it, for folk schulde geve the more faith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I speke of lesynge, whiche generally is fals signifiaunce of word, in entent to desceyven his even cristen. Som lesyng is, of whiche ther cometh noon avauntage to noon wight; and som lesyng torneth to the ease or profit of som man, and to damage of another man. Another lesyng is, for to save his lif or his catel. Another lesyng cometh of delit for to lye, in which delit thay wol forge a long tale, and paynte it with alle circumstaunces, wher as the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesyng cometh, for he wolde susteyne his word. Som lesyng cometh of rechelesnes withoute avisement, and semblable thinges.

Lat us now touche the vice of flaterie, which cometh not gladly, but for drede, or for coveitise. Flaterie is generally wrongful preysing. Flaterers ben the develes norices, that norisshen his children with mylk of losingerie. For sothe Salomon saith, that flaterie is

covered in rayn and droppyng, and a chidyng wyf, ben like. A man, that is in a dropping hous in many partes, though he eschewe the dropping in oon place, it droppeth on him in another place; so farith it by a chydinge wyf, but sche chide him in oon place, sche wol chide him in another. And therfore better is a morsel of bred with joye, than an hous ful of delices with chyding, seith Salomon. Seint Poul saith, o ye wommen, be ye sugettis to youre housbondes as bihovith in God; and ye men, loveth youre wyves.

After-ward speke we of scornyng, which is a wikked thing, and sinful, and namely, whan he scornith a man for his goode workes; for certes, suche scorners faren lik the foule toode, that may nought endure the soote smel of the vine roote, whan it florischith. These scorners ben partyng felawes with the devel, for thay han joye whan the devel wynneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. Thay ben adversaries of Jhesu Crist, for thay haten that he loveth, that is to say, savacioun of soule.

Speke we now of wikked counseil; for he that wickid counseil giveth he is a traytour, for he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absolonem.* But natheles, yet is his wikkid counseil first agens himself. For, as saith the wise man, every fals lyvyng hath this propreté in himself, that he that wil annoye another man, he annoyeth first himself. And men schul understonde, that man schulde nought take his counseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to moche her oughne profyt, ne in to moche worldly folk, namely, in counselyng of mannes soule.

Now cometh the synne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a synne that Crist hateth outrely; and no wondir is, for God died for to make concord. And more schame do thay to Crist, than dede thay that him crucifiede. For God loveth bettre, that frendschipe be amonges folk, thanne he dide his owne body, which that he gaf for unité. Therfore ben thay likned to the devel, that ever ben aboute to make discord.

Now comith the sinne of double tonge, suche as speken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihynde; or elles thay make semblaunt as though thay speke of good entencioun, or ellis in game and play, and yit thay speke in wikked entent.

Now cometh the wreying of counseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes unnethe may he restore that damage. Now cometh manace, that is an open foly; for he that ofte manaceth, he threttith more than he may parfourme ful ofte tyme. Now cometh idel wordes, that is withoute profyt of him that spekith the wordes, and eek of him that herkeneth tho wordes; or elles ydel wordes ben tho that ben needeles, or withouten entent of naturel profyt. And al be it that ydil wordes ben som tyme venial synne, yit schulde men doute hem for we schuln give rekenynge of hem bifore God. Now comith jangeling, that may nought be withoute synne; and, as saith Salomon, it is a signe of apert folie. And therfore a philosophre said, whan men askid him how men schulde plese the poeple, and he answerde, do many goode werkes, and spek fewe jangeles. After this cometh the

synne of japers, that ben the develes apes, for thay maken folk to laughen at here japes or japerie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape; suche japes defendith seint Poule. Loke how that vertuous and holy wordes conforten hem that travailen in the service of Crist, right so conforten the vileins[23] wordes and knakkis and japeries hem that travayle in the service of the devyl. These ben the synnes that cometh of ire, and of other synnes many mo.

Remedium contra iram.

Remedye agayns ire, is a vertue that men clepe mansuetude, that is deboneirté; and eek another vertue that men clepe pacience or sufferaunce. Debonaireté withdrawith and restreigneth the stiringes and the moevynges of mannys corrage in his herte, in such manere, that thai ne skip not out by anger ne by ire. Suffraunce suffrith swetely al the annoyaunce and the wronges that men doon to man out-ward. Seint Jerom saith thus of debonairté, that it doth noon harm to no wight, ne saith; ne for noon harm that men doon ne sayn, he ne eschaufith nought agayns resoun. This vertu comith som tyme of nature; for, as saith the philosopher, man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire, and tretable to goodnesse; but whan debonaireté is enformed of grace, than is it the more worth.

Pacience that is another remedie agains ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnes, and is not

[23] *vileins.* The Harl. MS. reads *violent.*

wroth for noon harm that is doon to him. The philosopher saith, that pacience is thilke vertue that suffrith deboneirly alle the outrages of adversité and every wickid word. This vertue makith a man lik to God, and makith him Goddes oughne dere child, as saith Crist. This vertu destroyeth thin enemy. And therfore saith the wise man, if thou wolt venquisch thin enemy lerne to suffre. And thou schalt understonde, that man suffrith foure maners of grevaunces in out-ward thinges, agains whiche he moot have foure maners of pacience. The firste grevaunce is of wicked wordes. Thilke suffred Jhesu Crist, withoute grucching, ful paciently, whan the Jewes despised him and reproved him ful ofte. Suffre thou therfore paciently, for the wise man saith, if thou strive with a fool, though the fool be wroth, or though he laughhe, algate thou schalt have no rest. That other grevaunce out-ward is to have damage of thi catel. Theragayn suffred Crist ful paciently, whan he was despoylid of al that he had in his lif, and that nas but his clothis. The thridde grevaunce is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful paciently in al his passioun. The ferthe grevaunce is in outrageous labour in werkis; wherfore I say, that folk that maken here servauntz to travaile to grevously, or out of tyme, as on haly dayes, sothely thay doon greet synne. Hereagainst suffred Crist ful paciently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar upon his blisful schulder the croys upon which he schulde suffre despitous deth. Here may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, nought oonly cristen men ben pacient

for the love of Jhesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful life that is pardurable, but the olde paynymes, that never were cristen, comaundedin and useden the vertu of pacience. A philosopher upon a tyme, that wolde have bete his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was gretly amoeved, and brought a yerde to scoure the child, and whan the child saugh the yerde, he sayde to his maister, "what thenke ye to do?" "I wolde bete the," quod the maister, "for thi correccioun." "Forsothe," quod the child, "ye oughte first correcte youresilf, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child." "Forsothe," quod the maister al wepyng, "thou saist soth; have thou the yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn impacience." Of pacience cometh obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to alle hem to which him oughte to be obedient in Crist. And understonde wel, that obedience is parfyt, whan a man doth gladly and hastily with good herte outrely al that he scholde do. Obedience is generally to parforme the doctrine of God, and of his soveraignes, to whiche him oughte to ben obeissant in alle rightwisnes.

De accidia.

After the synne of envye and ire, now wol I speke of accidie; for envye blendith the hert of a man, and ire troublith a man, and accidie makith him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envye and ire maken bitternes in herte, which bitternesse is mooder of accidie, and bynimith the love of alle goodnes; thanne is accidie the

anguische of a trouble hert. And seint Augustyn saith, it is annoye of goodnesse and annoye of harme. Certes this is a dampnable synne, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist, in as moche as it bynymeth the service that we ought to do to Crist with alle diligence, as saith Salomon; but accidie doth noon such diligence. He doth alle thing with anoy, and with wraweness,[24] slaknes, and excusacioun, and with ydelnes and unlust; for which the book saith, accursed be he that doth the service of God necligently. Thanne is accidie enemy to every astaat of man. For certes thestat of man is in thre maners; either it is thestat of innocence, as was thastate of Adam, biforn that he fel into synne, in which estate he is holden to worche, as in herying and honouryng of God. Another astat is thestate of sinful man; in which estate men ben holden to labore in praying to God for amendement of her synnes, and that he wolde graunte hem to rise out of here synnes. Another estaat is thestate of grace, in which he is holde to werkis of penitence; and certes, to alle these thinges is accidie enemye and contrarie, for it loveth no busynes at al. Now certis, this foule synne accidie is eek a ful gret enemy to the liflode of the body; for it hath no purveaunce agens temporel necessité, for it forslowthith, and forsluggith, and destroyeth alle goodes temporels by rechelesnes.

The ferthe thing is that accidie is like hem that ben in the peyne of helle, bycause of her slouthe and of her

[24] *wrawenes*. The Harl. MS. reads *draweness*.

hevynes; for thay that ben dampned, ben so bounde, that thay may nought wel do ne wel thenke. Of accidie cometh first, that a man is annoyed and encombrid for to do eny goodnes and makith that God hath abhominacioun of such accidie, as saith seint Johan.

Now cometh slouthe, that wol suffre noon hardnes ne no penaunce; for sothely, slouthe is so tendre and so delicat, as saith Salomon, that he wol suffre noon hardnes ne penaunce, and therfore he schendeth al that he doth. Agayns this roten hertid synne of accidie and of slouthe schulden men exercise hemself to do goode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchin corrage wel to doo, thinking that oure Lord Jhesu Crist quiteth every good dede, be it never so lyte. Usage of labour is a ful greet thing; for it makith, as saith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde synewes; and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne cometh drede to bygynne to werke eny goode deedes; for certes, who that is enclined to don synne,[25] him thinkith it is so gret emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnes, and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnes ben so grevous and so chargeaunt for to suffre, that he dare not undertake to doon werkes of goodnes,[26] as saith seint Gregory.

Now cometh wanhope, that is, despair of the mercy of God, that cometh som tyme of to moche outrageous

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[25] *Who that is enclined to don synne.* Tyrwhitt reads, *he that enclineth to sinne.*

[26] *and casteth . . . . werkes of goodnes.* These words are neither in the Harl. or Lansd. MSS.

sorwe, and som tyme of to moche drede, ymagynynge that he hath do so moche synne that it will not availe him, though he wolde repent him, and forsake synne; thurgh which despeir or drede, he abandounith al his herte to alle maner synne, as seith seint Augustin. Whiche dampnable synne, if ther it continue unto his lyves ende, it is cleped the synnyng of the holy gost. This horrible synne is so perilous, that he that is despaired, ther is no felonye, ne no synne, that he doutith for to do, as schewed wel by Judas. Certes, above alle synnes than is this synne most displesant to Crist, and most adversarie. Sothely, he that despeirith him, is like the coward campioun recreaunt, that flieth[28] withoute neede. Allas! allas! needeles is he recreaunt, and needeles despaired. Certes, the mercy of God is ever redy to the penitent, and is above alle his werkes. Allas! can not a man bythenk him on the Gospel of seint Luk, wheras Crist saith, that as wel schal ther be joye in heven upon a synful man that doth penitence, as upon nynety and nyne that ben rightful men that needen no penitence? Loke forther in the same Gospel, the joye and the fest of the goode man that had lost his sone, whan the sone with repentaunce was torned to his fader. Can not thay remembre eek that as saith seint Luk, xxiij°, how that the thef that was hangid biside Jhesu Crist, sayde, Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest into thy regne? For sothe saith Crist, to day thou schalt be with me in paradis. Certis, ther

[28] *flieth*. So Tyrwhitt; the Harl. reads *that seith recreaunt withoute neede*. The reading of the Lansd. MS. is *seithe creant*.

is noon so horrible synne of man, that it ne may in his lif be destroyed with penitence, thorugh vertue of the passioun of the deth of Crist. Allas! what needith it man thanne to be despaired, sith that his mercy is so redy and large? Aske and have. Thanne cometh sompnolence, that is, sluggy slumbring, which makith a man ben hevy and dul in body and in soule, and this synne cometh of slouthe; and certes, the tyme that by way of resoun man schulde nought slepe, that is by the morwe, but if ther were cause resonable. For sothely the morwe tyde is most covenable to a man to say his prayers, and for to thenk upon his God, and to honoure God, and to geve almes to the pore that first cometh in the name of Crist. Lo what saith Salomon; who so wol by the morwe arise and seeke me, schal fynde me. Than cometh negligence that rekkith of nothing. And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm, certis, necgligence is the norice. Necligence doth no force, whan he schal doon a thing, whethir he doo it wel or baddely.

Of the remedy of these tuo synnes, as saith the wise man, that he that dredith God, he sparith nought to do that him ought to don; and he that lovith God, wol do diligence to plese God by his werkis and abounde himself, with alle his might, wel for to doon. Thanne comith ydelnes, that is the gate of alle harmes. An ydil man is like an hous that hath noone walles; the develes may entre on every syde or schete at him at discovert by temptaciouns on every syde. This ydelnes is the thurrok of alle wickid vileyns thoughtes, and of

alle jangles, tryfles, and of alle ordure. Certes the heven is geven to hem that wol laboure and nought to ydil folk. Eke David saith, that thay ne ben not in the labour of men, ne thay schul not be wiped with men, that is to sain, in purgatorie. Certis thanne semeth it that thay schal be tormentid with the devel in helle, but if thay don penitence.

Thanne comith the synne that men clepe *tarditas*, as whan a man is so latrede or tarying er he wil torne to God; and certis, that is a gret foly. He is like him that fallith into the diche, and wol not arise. And this vice cometh of a fals hope, that he thinkith he schal lyve longe; but that hope fayleth full ofte.

Thanne comith laches, that is, he that when he bigynneth any good werk, anoon he wol forlete it and stynte, as doon thay that han eny wight to governe, and ne take of hem no more keep anoon as thay fynde eny contrarie or eny anoy. These ben the newe schepherdes, that leten her schep wityngely go renne to the wolf, that is in the breres, or don no force of her oughne governaunce. Of this cometh povert and destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and of temporel thinges. Thanne cometh a maner coldenesse, that freseth al the hert of man. Thanne cometh undevocioun thurgh which a man is so blunt, and as saith seint Bernard, he hath such a langour in soule, that he may neyther rede ne synge in holy chirche, ne heere ne thinke on devocioun in holy chirche, ne travayle with his hondes in no good werk, that nys to him unsavory and al apalled. Thanne waxith he slowe and slombry, and soone wol he be

wroth, and soone is enclined to hate and to envye. Thanne cometh the synne of worldly sorwe such as is clepid *tristitia*, that sleth man, as saith seint Poule. For certis such sorwe werkith to the deth of the soule and of the body also, for therof cometh, that a man is anoyed of his oughne lif, which sorwe schorteth ful ofte the lif of a man, or that his tyme is come by way of kynde.

Remedium contra accidiam.

Agains this horrible synne of accidie, and the braunches of the same, ther is a vertu that is cleped *fortitudo* or strengthe, that is, an affeccioun thurgh which a man despiseth alle noyous thinges. This vertu is so mighty and so vigurous, that it dar withstonde mightily the devel, and wisely kepe himself from perils that ben wicked, and wrastil agains the assautes of the devel; for it enhaunsith and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth it and makith it feble; for this *fortitudo* may endure with long sufferaunce the travailes that ben covenables. This vertu hath many spices; the first is cleped magnanimité, that is to sayn gret corrage. For certis ther bihoveth gret corrage agains accidie, lest that it ne swolwe not the soule by the synne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. This vertu makith folk undertake harde and grevous thinges by her owne wille, wilfully and resonably. And for als moche as the devel fighteth agaynst a man more by queyntise and by sleight than by strengthe, therfore many a man schal ageinstonde him by witte, and by resoun, and by discrecioun.

Thanne is ther the vertu of faith, and hope in God and in his seintes, to acheven[29] and to accomplice the goode werkes, in the whiche he purposith fermely to continue. Thanne cometh seurté or sikernes, and that is whan a man doutith no travaile in tyme comyng of good werk that a man hath bygonne. Thanne cometh magnificence, that is to say, whan a man doth and performith grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bygonne, and that is thend why that men schulden do goode werkes. For in the accomplising of grete goode werkes lith the grete guerdoun. Thanne is ther constaunce, that is stablenes of corrage, and this schulde ben in herte by stedefast faith, and in mouthe, and in berying, and in cheer, and in deede. Eek ther ben mo special remedies agayns accidie, in dyvers werkis, and in consideracioun of the peyne of helle and of the joye of heven, and in the trust of the hyhe grace of the holy gost, that wil geve him might to parforme his good entent.

De avaritia.

After accidie I wil speke of avarice, and of coveytise; of whiche synne saith seint Poule, that the roote of alle eveles and harmes is coveytise. For sothely whan the hert of man is confoundid in itself and troublid and that the soule hath lost the comfort of God, thanne seekith he an ydel solas of worldly thinges. Avarice, after the descripcioun of seint Austyn, is a likerousnes

[29] *acheven*. The Harl. MS. reads *to eschew*, which appears to be contrary to the sense.

in hert to have erthely thinges, Some other folk sayn, that avarice is for to purchase many erthely thinges, and no thing geve to hem that han neede. And understonde, that avarice ne stont not oonly in lond ne in catel, but som tyme in science and in glorie, and eny maner[30] outrageous thinges is avarice. And the difference bytwixe avarice and coveytise is this: coveitise is for to coveyte suche thinges as thou hast not; and avarice is to withholde and kepe suche thinges as thou hast, withoute rightful neede. Sothely, this avarice is a synne that is ful dampnable, for al holy writ curseth it, and spekith agayn that vice, for it doth wrong to Jhesu Crist; for it bireveth him the love that men to him owen, and turnith it bakward agayns al resoun, and makith that the avarous man hath more hope in his catel than in Jhesu Crist, and doth more observaunce in keping of his tresour, than he doth in the service of Jhesu Crist. And therfore saith seint Poule, *ad Ephes.* that an averous man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.

What difference is ther bitwen an ydolaster and an avarous man, but that an ydolaster peradventure hadde but a mawment or tuo, and the avarous man hath manye? for certes, every floreine in his coffre is his mawmet. And certes, the synne of mawmetrie is the firste thing that God defendith in the ten comaundementz, as berith witnes in *Exod. cap.* xx, Thou schalt have noone false goddes biforn me, ne thou schalt make to the no grave thing. Thus is he an averous man, that loveth

[30] *eny maner.* Tyrwhitt reads *in every maner.*

his tresor toforn God, and an idolaster. Thurgh his cursed synne of avarice and coveytise comen these harde lordschipes, thurgh whiche men ben destreyned by talliages, custumes, and cariages, more than here dueté of resoun is; and elles take thay of here bondemen amercimentes, whiche mighte more resonably ben callid extorciouns than mercymentis. Of whiche mersyments and raunsonyng of bondemen, some lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful, for as moche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it nys his lordes, as thay sayn. But certes, thise lordeshipes doon wrong, that bireven here bondemen thinges that thay never gave hem. *Augustinus de Civitate Dei, libro* ix. Soth is the condicioun of thraldom, and the firste cause of thraldom is sinne. *Genes.* v.

Thus may ye seen, that the gilt deserved thraldom, but not nature. Wherfore these lordes schulden nought to moche glorifie in here lordschipes, sith that by naturel condicioun thay ben nought lordes of here thralles, but for thraldom com first by the desert of synne. And fortherover, ther as the lawe sayth, that temporel goodes of bondefolk been the goodes of her lordes; ye, that is to understonde, the goodes of the emperour, to defende hem in here right, but not to robbe hem ne to reve hem. And therfore seith Seneca, thi prudence schulde live benignely with thi thrallis. Thilke that thay clepe thralles, ben Goddes poeple; for humble folk ben Cristes frendes; thay ben contubernially with the Lord. Thenk eek as of such seed as cherles springen of such seed springe lordes; as wel

and unleful. Of thilke bodily marchaundise that is honest and leful is this, that ther as God hath ordeyned, that a regne or a cuntré is suffisaunt to himself, thanne is it honest and leful, that of the abundaunçe of this contré men helpe another cuntré that is more needy; and therfore ther moote be marchauntz to bringe fro that oon cuntré to that other her merchaundise. That other marchaundise, that men hauntyn with fraude, and treccherie, and deceipt, with lesynges and fals othis, is cursed and dampnable. Espirituel marchaundize is proprely symonie, that is, ententyf desire to beye thing espirituel, that is, thing that apperteyneth to the seintuarie of God, and to the cure of the soule. This desire, if so be that a man do his diligence to parforme it, al be it that his desir take noon effect, yit is it to him a dedly synne; and if he be ordrid, he is irreguler. Certis symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han bought for temporel catel the gifte that God had given by the holy gost to seint Petir, and to thapostlis; and therfor understonde, that bothe he that sellith and he that bieth thinges espiritueles ben cleped symonials, be it by catel, be it by procurement, or by fleisshly prayere of his frendes, either fleisshly frendes or spirituel frendes, fleisshly in tuo maneres, as by kynrede or other frendes. Sothely, if thay pray for him that is not worthy and able, if he take the benefice it is symonie; and if he be worthy and able, it is non. That other maner is, whan man, or woman, prayen for folk to avaunce hem oonly for wikkid fleisshly affeccioun that thay have unto the persone, and that is ful symonye. But certis, in service, for whiche

men given thinges espirituels unto her servauntes, it moste ben understonde, that the service moste be honest, and ellis not, and eek that it be withoute bargaynynge, and that the persone be able. For, as saith seint Damase, alle the synnes of this world, at the reward of this synne, is a thing of nought, for it is the gretteste synne that may be after the synne of Lucifer and of Antecrist; for by this synne God forlesith the chirche and the soule, that he bought with his precious blood, by hem that geven chirches to hem that ben not digne, for thay putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Jhesu Crist, and destroyen his patrimoygne. By suche undigne prestis and curates han lewed men lasse reverence of the sacrament of holy chirche; and suche geveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten into the chirche the develes oughne sone; thay sellen soules that lambes schulde kepe to the wolf that stranglith hem; and therfore schal thay never have part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of heven.

Now cometh hasardrie with his appertenaunce, as tables and rafles, of whiche cometh deceipt, fals othis, chidynges, and alle raveynes, blasphemyng, and reneying of God and hate of his neighebors, wast of goodes, mispending of tyme, and som tyme manslaughter. Certes, hasardours ne mowe not be withoute gret synne, whil thay haunte that craft. Of avarice cometh eek lesynges, thefte, and fals witnesse and fals othes. And ye schul undirstonde, that these ben grete synnes, and expresce agains the comaundementz of God, as I have sayd. Fals witnesse is in word and eek in dede; as for to bireve thin

neighebor his good name by thy fals witnessinge, or bireve him his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnesse, whan thou for ire, or for meede, or for envie, berest fals witnes, or accusist him, or excusist him by thy fals witnes, or ellis excusist thiself falsly. Ware yow questemongers and notaries. Certis, for fals witnessynge was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. The synne of thefte is eek expresse agayns Goddes hestis, and that in tuo maners, corporel and spirituel; corporel, as for to take thy neighebours catel agayns his wille, be it by force or by sleight; be it by mette or by mesure; by stelynge eek of fals enditements upon him; and in borwyng of thin neghebores catelle in entent never to paye, and in semblable thinges Espirituel thefte is sacrilege, that is to sayn, hurtynge of holy thinges, or of thing sacred to Crist. Sacrilege is in tuo maneres; that oon is by reasoun of holy place, as chirches or chirchehawes; for whiche every vileins synne that men doon in suche places may be clepid sacrilege, or every violence in semblable place; that other maner is as tho that withdrawen falsly the rentes and rightes that longen to holy chirche; and generally, sacrilege is to reve holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

Remedium contra avariciam.

Now schul ye understonde that the relevynge of avarice is misericorde and pité largely taken. And men might axen, why that misericord and pité is relievyng of avarice; certes, the avaricious man schewith no pité

ne misericorde to the needeful man. For he delitith him in the kepyng of his tresor, and nought in the rescowing ne relievyng of his even cristen. And therfore speke I first of misericord. Thanne is misericord, as saith the philosopher, a vertu, by which the corrage of a man is stired by the myseise of him that is myseysed. Upon which misericorde folwith pité, in parformyng of chariteable werkis of mercie, helping and comforting him that is misesed. And certes, these moeven men to the misericord of Jhesu Crist, that gaf himself for oure gult, and suffred deth for misericord, and forgaf us oure original synne, and therby relessid us fro peyne of helle, and amenusid the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and geveth grace wel to do, and at the laste the joye of heven. The spices of misericorde ben for to love, and for to give, and eek for to forgive and for to relesse, and for to have pité in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his even cristen, and eek chastize ther as neede is. Another maner of remedye agayns avarice, is resonable largesse; but sothely here bihovith the consideracioun of the grace of Jhesu Crist, and of the temporel goodes, and eek of the goodes perdurable that Crist gaf us, and eek to have remembraunce of the deth that he schal resceyve, he noot not whanne; and eke he schal forgon al that he hath, save oonly that he hath dispendid in goode werkes.

But for als moche as some folk ben unresonable, men oughte to eschiewe foly-largesse, the whiche men clepen wast. Certes, he that is fool-large, he giveth nought

his catel, but he leseth his catel. Sothely, what thing that he giveth for vaynglorie, as to mynstrals, and to folk for to bere his renoun in the world, he hath synne therof, and noon almes; certes, he lesith foule his goodes, that sekith with the gift of his good no thing but synne. He is like to an hors that sekith rather to drynke drovy watir, and trouble, than for to drinke watir of the welle that is cleer. And for as moche as thay give ther as thay schuld not give, to hem appendith thilke malisoun that Crist schal give at the day of doom to hem that schal be dampned.

De gula.

After avarice cometh glotenye, which is expresse eke agayns the comaundement of God. Glotenye is unresonable and desordeyned coveytise to ete and to drynke. This synne corruptid al this world, as is wel schewed in the synne of Adam and of Eva. Loke eek what saith seint Poul of glotouns; many, saith he, gon, of whiche I have ofte said to yow, and now I say it wepyng, that thay ben thenemyes of the cros of Crist, of whiche thende is deth, and of whiche here wombe is here God and here glorie; in confusioun of hem that so saveren erthely thinges. He that is usaunt to this synne of glotonie, he ne may no synne withstonde, he moste be in servage of alle vices, for it is the develes horde, ther he hideth him inne and resteth. This synne hath many spices. The firste is dronkenes, that is thorrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therfore whan man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and

this is dedly synne. But schortly, whan that a man is not wont to strong drinke, and peraventure ne knowith not the strengthe of the drynk, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travayled, thurgh whiche he drynkith the more, and be sodeynly caught with drynke, it is no dedly synne, but venial. The secounde spice of glotenie is, whan the spirit of a man wexith al trouble for drunkenesse, and bireveth him his witte and his discressioun. The thridde spice of glotouns is, when a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful maner of etyng. The ferthe is, whan thurgh the grete abundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been distemprid. The fifte is, forgetfulnes by to moche drinking, for which a man somtyme forgetith by the morwe, what he dide at eve, or on the night bifore.

In other maner ben distinct the spices of glotonye, after seint Gregory. The firste is, for to ete or drynke byfore tyme to ete. The secound is, whan man giveth him to delicate mete or drinke. The thridde is, whanne man takith to moche therof over mesure. The ferthe is, curiosité, with gret entent to make and apparayle his mete. The fifte is, for to ete to gredely. These ben the fyve fyngres of the develes hand, by whiche he drawith folk to synne.

Remedium contra gulam.

Agayns glotonye the remedie is abstinence, as saith Galien; but that hold I nought meritorie, if he do it oonly for the hele of his body. Seint Austyn wol that abstinence be don for vertu, and with pacience. Ab-

stinence, he saith, is litil worth, but if a man have good wille therto, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charité, and that men doon it for Goddes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of heven. The felawes of abstinence ben attemperaunce, that holdith the mene in alle thinges; eek schame, that eschiewith al dishonesté; suffisaunce, that seeketh noone riche metes ne drynkes, ne doth no force of to outrageous apparaillyng of mete; mesure also, that restreyneth by reson the dislave appetit of etyng; sobernes also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke; sparing also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at mete, wherfore som folk stonden of here owne wille to ete, because they wol ete at lasse leysir.

De luxuria.

After glotonye thanne cometh leccherie, for these two synnes ben so neih cosyns, that ofte tyme thay wol not departe. *Unde Paulus ad Ephes., nolite inebriari vino in quo est luxuria, etc.* God wot this synne is full displesaunt thing to God, for he sayde himself, Do no leccherie. And therfore he putte gret peyne agayn this synne. For in the olde law, if a womman thral were take in this synne, sche scholde be beten with staves to the deth; and if sche were a gentilwomman, sche schulde be slayn with stoons; and if sche were a bisschoppis doughter, sche schulde be brent by Goddis comaundement. Fortherover, for the synne of leccherie God dreinte al the world at the diluvie, and after that he brent fyve citees with thonder layt, and sonk hem into helle.

Now let us thanne speke of thilke stynkyng synne of leccherie, that men clepen advoutry, that is of weddid folk, that is to sayn, if that oon of hem be weddid, or elles bothe. Seint Johan saith, that advouterers schuln be in helle in watir brennyng of fuyr and of brimston; in fuyr for the leccherie, in brimston for the stynk of her ordure. Certis the brekyng of this sacrament is an horrible thing; it was makid of God himself in Paradis, and confermed of Jhesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew; a man schall lete fader and mooder, and take him to his wif, and thay schul ben two in oon fleisch. This sacrament bitokeneth the knyttyng togider of Crist and of holy chirche. And nat oonly that God forbad advotrie in dede, but eek he comaunded, that thou scholdest not coveyte thy neyhebors wif. In this heste, seith seint Austyn, is forboden al maner coveytise to do leccherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the Gospel, that who so seth a womman, to coveytise of his lust, he hath doon lecchery with hir in his herte. Here may ye se, that nought oonly the dede of this synne is forboden, but eek the desir to do that synne. This cursed synne annoyeth grevously hem that it haunten; and first to here soule, for he obligith it to synne and to pyne of the deth that is perdurable; unto the body annoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth him and wastith him, and schent him, and of his blood he makith sacrifice to the devel of helle; it wastith eek his catel and his substaunce. And certes, if that it be a foul thing a man to waste his catel on wommen, yit is it a fouler thing, whan that for such ordure wommen

dispende upon men here catel and here substaunce. This synne, as saith the prophete, byreveth man and womman her good fame and al here honour, and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel; for therby wynneth he the moste pray of this world. And right as a marchaunt deliteth him most in chaffare that he hath most avauntage of, right so delitith the feend in this ordure.

This is the other hond of the devel, with fyve fyngres, to cacche the poeple to his vilonye. The firste fynger is the foule lokyng of the foule womman and of the foule man, that sleth right as a basiliskoc sleth folk by the venym of his sight; for the coveytise of eyen folwith the coveytise of the herte. The secounde fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikkid manere. And therfore saith Salomon, that who so touchith and handelith a womman, he farith lik him that handelith the scorpioun, that styngith and sodeinly sleeth thurgh his envenemynge; or as who so touchith warm picche, it schent his fyngres. The thridde is foule wordes, that farith lik fuyr, that right anoon brenneth the herte. The ferthe is the kissyng; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brennyng oven or of a forneys; and more fooles ben thay that kyssen in vilonye, for that mouth is the mouth of helle; and namely thise olde dotard fooles holours, yit wol thay kisse, and flikkere, and besien hemself, though thay may nought do.[32] Certis thay ben like to houndes; for an hound whan he cometh to a roser, or by other bussches,

[32] *kisse ... nought do.* The Harl. MS., supported by the Lansd. MS., reads, *kisse, though thay may nought do and smater hem.* The reading in the text, which is that of Tyrwhitt, seems to me better.

though he may nought pisse, yet wil he heve up his leg and make a countenaunce to pisse. And for that many man weneth he may not synne for no licorousnes that he doth with his wif, certis that oppinioun is fals; God wot a man may sle himself with his owne knyf, and make himself dronke of his oughne tonne. Certis, be it wif, or child, or eny worldly thing, that he lovyth biforn God, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre. Man schulde love his wyf by discrescioun, paciently and attemperelly, and thanne is sche as it were his suster. The fyfte fynger of the develes hond, is the stynkynge dede of leccherie. Certes the fyve fyngres of glotonye the devel put in the wombe of a man; and his fyve fyngres of lecchery bygripeth him by the reynes, for to throwe him into the fourneys of helle, there as they schuln have the fuyr and the wormes that ever schal lasten, and wepyng and wayling, and scharp hunger and thurst, and grislines of develes, that schul al to-tere hem withoute respit and withouten ende. Of leccherie, as I sayde, sourdren divers spices; as fornicacioun, that is bitwen man and womman that ben nought maried, and this is dedly synne, and against nature. Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature, is agayns nature. Par fay the resoun of a man tellith him wel that it is dedly synne; for als moche as God forbad leccherie. And seint Poule gevith hem that regne that is due to no wight but hem that doon synne dedly. Another synne of lecchery is, for to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhede; for he that so doth, certes he casteth a mayden out of the heighest degré that is in the present lif, and birevith

hir thilke precious fruyt that the book clepith the hundrid fruyt—I can geve it noon other name in Englisch, but in Latyn it is i-clepid *centesimus fructus (secundum Hieronymum contra Jovinianum)*. Certes he that so doth, is cause of many harmes and vilenyes, mo than eny man can rekene; right as he som tyme is cause of alle the damages that bestis doon in the feeld, that brekith the hegge of the closure, thurgh which he destroyeth that may not be restored; for certes no more may maydenhode be restored, than an arm, that is smyten fro the body, retourne agayn to waxe; sche may have mercy, this wot I wel, if sche have wille to do penitence, but never schal it be but that sche nas corrupt. And al be it so that I have spoke somwhat of advoutré, yit is it good to speke of mo perils that longen to advoutré, for to eschiewe that foule synne. Advoutrie, in Latyn, is for to sayn, approaching of other mannes bed, thorugh the which tho that whilom were oon fleisch, abandone here bodyes to other persones. Of this synne, as saith the wise man, many harmes cometh therof; first, brekyng of faith; and certes faith is the keye of cristendom, and whan that faith is broke and lorn, sothely cristendom is lorn, and stont veyn and withouten fruyt. This synne is eek a theef, for thefte is generally to speke to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. Certis, this is the foulest thefte that may be, whan a womman stelith hir body from hire housbonde, and giveth it to hire holour to defoule hire, and stelith hir soule fro Crist, and gevith it to the devel. This is a fouler thefte than for to breke a

chirche and stele chalises, for these advouterers breke the temple of God spirituelly, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is the body and the soule; for which Jhesu Crist schal destroyen hem, as saith seint Poule. Sothely of this thefte doubtyd gretly Joseph, whan that his lordes wyf prayde him of vilonye, whan he saide, "Lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world, ne no thing of his power is oute of my power, but oonly ye that ben his wyf; and how schuld I do thanne this wikkidnes, and synne so horribly agayns God, and my Lord? God it forbede!" Alas! al to litel is such trouthe now i-founde. The thridde harm is the filthe, thurgh which thay breken the comaundement of God, and defoule the auctour of here matrimonye, that is Crist. For certis, in so moche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so moche is it the gretter synne for to breke it; for God makid mariage in Paradis in thestat of innocence, to multiplie mankynde to the service of God, and therfore is the brekyng therof the more grevous, of which breking cometh fals heires ofte tymes, that wrongfully occupien mennes heritage; and therfore wolde Crist putte hem out of the regne of heven, that is heritage to goode folk. Of this breking cometh eek ofte tyme, that folk unwar wedden or synnen with her kynrede; and namely these harlottis, that haunten bordels of these foule wommen, that mowe be likened to a comune gonge, whereas men purgen here entrayles of her ordure. What say we eke of putours, that lyven by the orrible synne of putrie, and constreyne wymmen,

ye, som tyme his oughne wyf or his child, as don these baudes, to yelde hem a certeyn rente of here bodily putrie? certes, these ben cursede synnes. Understonde eek that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comaundements bitwixe manslaughter and thefte, for it is the grettest thefte that may be, for it is thefte of body and soule, and it is lik to homicidie, for it kerveth a-tuo hem that first were makid oon fleisch. And therfore by the olde lawe of God thay scholde be slayn, but natheles, by the lawe of Jhesu Crist, that is the lawe of pité, whan he sayde to the womman that was founde in advoutri, and schulde have ben slayn with stoones aftir the wille of the Jewes, as was her law, "Go," quod Jhesu Crist, "and wilne no more to do synne;" sothely, the vengeance of avouterye is awardid to the peyne of helle, but if be destourbed by penitence. Yit ben ther mo spices of this cursed synne, as whan that oon of hem is religious, or ellis bothe, or for folk that ben entred into ordre, as sub-dekin, or dekin, or prest, or hospitalers; and ever the higher that he be in ordre, the gretter is the synne. The thinges that gretly aggreggith her synne, is the brekyng of here avow of chastité, whan thay resceyved the ordre; and fortherover is soth, that holy ordre is chefe of alle the tresor of God, and is a special signe and mark of chastité, to schewe that thay ben joyned to chastité, which that is the moste precious lif that is. And eek these ordred folk ben specially tytled to God, and of the special meyné of God; of whiche whan thay don dedly synne, thay ben the special traytours of God and of his poeple, for thay lyven of the poeple to praye

for the poeple, and whil thay ben suche traytours here prayer avayleth not to the poeple. Prestis ben aungels, as by the dignité of here misterie; but for sothe seint Poul saith, that Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light. Sothely, the prest that hauntith dedly synne, he may be likened to the aungel of derknes, transformed into the aungel of light; and he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungil of derknes. Suche prestes ben the sones of Helie, as schewith in the book of Kinges, that thay were the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. Belial is to say, withoute juge, and so faren thay; thay thynke hem fre, and han no juge, no more than hath a fre bole, that takith which cow that him liketh in the toun. So faren thay by wommen; for right as a fre bole is y-nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked prest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisch, or for al a contray. These prestes, as saith the book, ne conne not ministere the mistery of presthode to the poeple, ne God ne knowe thay not; thay holde hem nought apayed, as saith the book, of soden fleissh that was to hem offred, but thay tooke by force the fleissch that is raw. Certes, so these schrewes holde hem not appayed with rosted fleissh and sode fleissh, with whiche the poeple feeden hem in gret reverence, but thay wil have raw fleisch of folkes wyves and here doughtres. And certes, these wommen that consenten to here harlotrie, don gret wrong to Crist and to holy chirche, and to alle halwes, and to alle soules, for thay bireven alle these hem that schulde worschipe Crist and holy chirche and praye for cristen soules. And therfore han suche prestis, and here lemmans eeke that consenten

to here leccherie, the malisoun of al the court cristian, til thay come to amendement. The thridde spice of advoutry is som tyme bitwix a man and his wif, and that is, whan thay take noon reward in her assembling but only to the fleischly delit, as seith seint Jerom, and ne rekke of no thing but that thay be assemblid bycause that thay ben maried; al is good y-nough as thinkith hem. But in suche folk hath the devel power, as saith the aungel Raphael to Thoby, for in here assemblyng, thay putten Jhesu Crist out of her herte, and given hemself to alle ordure. The ferthe spice is the assemblé of hem that ben of here kynrede, or of hem that ben of oon affinité, or elles with hem with whiche here fadres or here kynrede han deled in the synne of leccherie; this synne makith hem like houndes, that taken noon heede of kynrede. And certes, parenteal is in tuo maneres, eyther gostly or fleisshly. Gostly, as for to dele with her gossib; for right so as he that engendrith a child, is his fleisshly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espirituel; for which a womman may in no laasse synne assemble with hir gossib, than with hire oughne fleischly fader or brother. The fifte spice is thilke abhominable synne, of which that no man unnethe oughte to speke ne write, natheles it is openly rehersed in holy wryt. But though that holy writ speke of horrible synne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the sonne that schyneth on a dongehul.[33] Another synne apperteneth to lecche-

[33] *a dongehul.* The Lansd. MS. reads, *on a mexen*, and Tyrwhitt, *on the myxene.*

ry, that cometh in sleping, and this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydenes, and eek to hem that ben corrupte; and this synne men clepen pollucioun, that cometh in foure maners; som tyme it cometh of languisschynge of the body, for the humours ben to ranke and to abundaunt in the body of man; som tyme of infirmité, for feblenesse of the vertu retentyf, as phisik maketh mencioun; and som tyme for surfete of mete and drynke; som tyme of vileins thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes mynde whan he gothe to slepe, which may not be withouten synne; for which man must kepe him wisely, or elles may men synne grevously,

Remedium contra luxuriam.

Now cometh the remedye agens lecchery, and that is generally chastité of wikkedhede and continence that restreyneth alle the disordeigne moevynges that comen of fleischly talentes; and ever the gretter meryt schal he han that most restreyneth eschaufynges of ordure of this synne; and this is in tuo maneres; that is to sayn, chastité of mariage, and chastité of widewhede. Now schalt thou understonde, that matrimoigne is leful assemblynge of man and womman, that resceyven by vertu of this sacrement the bond thurgh which thay may not be departid in al here lif, that is to say, while thay lyven bothe. This, as saith the boke, is a ful gret sacrement; God makid it (as I have said) in Paradis, and wolde himself be born in mariage; and for to halwen mariage he was at the weddyng wheras he turnede watir into wyn, which was the firste miracle that he wrought

in erthe biforn his disciples. The trewe effect of mariage clensith fornicacioun, and replenischith holy chirche of good lynage, for that is the ende of mariage, and it chaungith dedly synne into venyal synne bituixe hem that ben weddid, and maketh the hertes al one, as well as the bodyes. This is verray mariage that was first blessed by God, er that the synne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his right poynt in Paradis; and it was ordeyned, that oon man schulde have but oon womman, and oon womman but oon man, as saith seint Augustyn, by many resouns. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche; another is, for a man is heed of a womman; (algate by ordinaunce it schulde be so;) for if a womman had mo men than oon, than schulde sche have mo hedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn God; and eek a womman myghte nought please many folk al at oones; and also ther ne schulde never be pees and rest among hem, for everich wolde aske his oughne thing. And fortherover, no man schulde knowe his oughne engendrure, ne who schulde have his heritage, and the womman scholde be the lasse loved fro the tyme that sche were joyned to many men.

Now cometh how that a man schulde bere him with his wif, and namely in tuo thinges, that is to sayn, in sufferaunce and in reverence, and that schewed Crist whan he made first womman. For he ne made hire not of the heed of Adam, for sche schulde not to gret lordschipe have; for ther as the womman hath the maistry, sche makith to moche disaray; ther nedith

noon ensample of this, the experience that we have day by day oughte suffice. Also certes, God ne made nought womman of the foot of Adam, for sche ne scholde nought be holden to lowe, for sche can not paciently suffre. But God made womman of the ribbe of Adam, for womman schulde be felawe unto man. Man schulde bere him to his wif in faith, in trouthe, and in love; as saith seint Poule, that a man schulde love his wif, as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyed for it; so schulde a man for his wyf, if it were neede.

Now how that a womman schulde be subject to hir housbonde, that tellith seint Peter, iij°, c°; first in obedience. And eek, as saith the decré, a womman that is a wif, as longe as sche is a wif, sche hath noon auctorité to swere ne to bere witnesse, without leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord; algate he schulde be so by resoun. Sche schulde eek serve him in al honesté, and ben attempre of hir array. I wot wel that thay schulde sette here entent to please her housebondes, but nought by here queyntise of array. Seint Jerom saith, that wyves that ben arrayed in silk and in purpre, ne mowe nought clothe hem in Jhesu Crist. Loke what saith saint Johan eek in the same matier. Seint Gregori saith eek, that no wight sekith precious clothing ne array, but oonly for veynglorie to ben honoured the more biforn the poeple. It is a gret folly, a womman to have fair array out-ward, and hirsilf to ben foul in-ward. A wyf schulde eek be mesurable in lokyng, and in beryng, and in laugheing, and discrete in

alle hir wordes and hir dedes, and above alle worldly thinges sche schulde love hir housebonde with al hire herte, and to him to be trewe of hir body; so scholde an housebonde eeke ben trewe to his wif; for sith that al the body is the housebondes, so schulde here herte ben, or elles ther is bitwixe hem tuo, as in that, no parfyt mariage. Thanne schal men understonde, that for thre thinges a man and his wyf mowe fleischly assemble. The firste is, in entent of engendrure of children, to the service of God, for certis that is the cause fynal of matrimoyne. The secounde cause is, to yelden everych of hem his dette unto other of his body; for neyther of hem hath power of his oughne body. The thridde is, for to eschiewe leccherie and vilenye. The ferthe for sothe is dedly synne. As to the firste, it is meritory; the secounde also, for, as saith the decré, that sche hath merit of chastité, that yeldith to hir housebonde the dette of hir body, ye though it be agayn hir likyng and the lust of hir hert. The thridde maner is venial synne; and trewly, scarsly may eny of these be withoute venial synne, for the corrupcioun and for the delit. The ferthe maner is for to understonde, as if thay assemble oonly for amorous love, and for noon of the forsayde causes, but for to accomplise thilke brennynge delyt, thay rekke never how ofte, sothely it is dedly synne; and yit, with sorwe, some folk wole more peyne hem for to doon, than to her appetit suffiseth.

The secounde maner of chastité is to ben a clene widewe, and to eschiewe the embrasynges of men, and desiren the embrasynges of Jhesu Crist. These ben tho

that han ben wyves, and han forgon here housebondes, and eek wommen that han doon leccherie, and be relieved by penitence. And certis, if that a wyf couthe kepe hir al chast, by licence of hir housebonde, so that sche geve non occasioun that he agilt, it were to hir a gret merit. Thise maner wymmen, that observen chastité, moste be clene in herte as wel as in body, and in thought, and mesurable in clothing and in countenaunce, abstinent in etyng and drynkyng, in speche and in dede, and thanne is sche the vessel or the boyst of the blessed Magdaleyne, that fulfillith holy chirche ful of good odour. The thridde maner of chastité is virginité, and it bihoveth that sche be holy in herte, and clene of body, and thanne is sche spouse of Jhesu Crist, and sche is the lif of aungels; sche is the preysyng of this world, and sche is as these martires in egalité; sche hath in hir that tongue may nought telle. Virginité bar oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and virgine was himselve.

Another remedy agayns leccherie is specially to withdrawe suche thinges, as given occasioun to thilke vilonye; as is ease, and etyng, and drynkyng; for certes, whan the pot boylith strongely, the beste remedye is to withdrawe the fuyr. Sleping eek longe in greet quiete is also a greet norice unto leccherie.

Another remedye agayns leccherie is, that a man or a womman eschiewe the companye of hem by whiche he doutith to be tempted; for al be it so that the dede be withstonde, yit is ther gret temptacioun, Sothely a whit wal, although it brenne not fully by stikyng of a

candel, yet is the wal blak of the leyte. Ful ofte tyme I rede, that no man truste in his oughne perfeccioun, but he be strenger than Sampson, or holiere than Davyd, or wiser than Salomon.

Now after that I have declared yow the seven dedly synnes as I can, and some of here braunches, and here remedyes, sothely, if I couthe, I wolde telle yow the ten comaundementes, but so heigh a doctrine I leve to divines. But natheles, I hope to God thay ben touchid in this litil tretys everich of hem alle.

Now for as moche as the secounde part of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the first chapitre, I say, seint Austyn saith, synne is every word and every dede, and al that men coveyten agayn the lawe of Jhesu Crist; and this is for to synne, in herte, in mouthe, and in dede, by thy fyve wittis, that ben sight, heeryng, smellyng, tastyng, or savoryng, or felyng. Now it is good to understonden the circumstaunces, that aggreggen moche to every synne. Thou schalt considre what thou art that dost the synne, whethir that thou be mal or femal, old other yong, gentil or thral, fre or servaunt, hool or seek, weddid or sengle, ordrid or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculer; if sche be of thy kyn, bodily or gostly, or noon; if eny of thy kynrede have synned with hire or noon, and many mo thinges.

That other circumstaunce is, whether it be don in fornicacioun or in advoutry, or incest, or noon, or mayden or noon, in maner of homicide or non, horrible grete synne or smale, and how long thou hast continued

in synne. The thridde circumstaunce is the place wher thou hast don synne, whether in other mennes houses, or in thin owne, in feld, or in chirche, or in chirchehawe, in chirche dedicate, or noon. For if the chirche were halowed, and man or womman spillid his kynde within that place, by way of synne or by wykked temptacioun, it is enterdited til it be reconsiled by the bischop; and the prest scholde be enterdyted that dede such a vilonye to terme of al his lyf, and scholde no more synge no masse; and if he dede, he schulde do dedly synne, at every tyme that he song masse. The ferthe circumstaunce is, by which mediatours, as by messagers, or for entysement, or for consentement, to bere companye with felawship; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wol go to the devel of helle. For thay that eggyn or consentyn to the synne, ben parteneres of the synne, and of the dampnacioun of the synnere. The fyfte circumstaunce is, how many tymes that he hath synned, if it be in his mynde, and how ofte he hath falle. For he that ofte fallith in synne, despiseth the mercy of God, and encresceth his synne, and is unkynde to Crist, and he waxith the more feble to withstonde synne, and synneth the more lightly, and the latter arrisith, and is the more eschiewe[34] to schrive him, and namely to him that hath ben his confessour. For whiche that folk, whan thay falle agayn to here olde folies, eyther thay forletin her confessours al utterly, or ellis thay departen here

[34] *eschiewe.* Tyrwhitt reads, *the more slow.*

schrifte in divers places; but sothely such departed schrifte hath no mercy of God of his synnes. The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth, as by which temptacioun; and if himself procure thilke temptacioun, or by excityng of other folk; or if he synne with a womman by force or by hir owne assent; or if the womman maugré hir heed hath ben enforced or noon, this schal sche telle, and whether it were for coveytise or for poverte, and if it was hire procuryng or noon, and alle such maner harneys. The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what maner he hath don his synne, or how that sche hath suffred that folk han doon to hire. The same schal the man telle pleynly, with alle the circumstaunces, and whether he have synned with commune bordeal womman or noon, or doon his synne in holy tyme or noon, in fastyng tyme or noon, or biforn his schrifte, or after his latter schrifte, and hath peradventure broken therby his penaunce enjoyned therfor, by whos help or by whos counseil, by sorcery or by other crafte, al moste be told. Alle these thinges, after thay be grete or smale, engreggen the consciens of a man. And eek the prest that is the jugge, may the better ben avysed of his jugement in givyng of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun. For understonde wel, that after the tyme that a man hath defouled his baptisme by synne, if he wol come to savacioun, ther is noon other wey but penitence, and schrifte of mouthe, and by satisfaccioun; and namely by tho tuo, if ther be a confessour to which he may schryve him, and the thridde if he have lif to parforme it.

Thanne schal men loke it and considre, that if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condiciouns. First, it moste ben in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as sayde the king Ezechiel to God, I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lif in bitternes of myn hert. This condicioun of bitternes hath fyve signes; the first is, that confessioun moste be schamefast, not for to covere ne hyde his synne, but for he hath agultid his God and defoulid his soule. And herof saith seint Augustyn, the herte tremblith for schame of his synne, and for he hath gret schamefastnes he is digne to have gret mercy of God. Such was the confessioun of the publican, that wolde nought heve up his eyghen to heven, for he had offendid God of heven; for which schamefastnes he had anon the mercy of God. And therfore seith seint Augustyn, that such schamefast folk ben next forgevenes of remissioun. The secounde signe, is humilité of confessioun; of which saith seint Petre, humblith yow under the might of God; the hond of God is myghty in confessioun, for therby God forgiveth the thy synnes, for he alone hath the power. And this humilité schal ben in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilité to God in his herte, right so schulde he humble his body out-ward to the prest, that sittith in Goddes place. For which in no manere, sith that Crist is soverayn, and the prest is his mene and mediatour betwix Crist and the synnere, and the synner is the lasse as by way of resoun, thanne schulde nought the confessour sitte as lowe as the synnere, but the synnere schulde knele biforn him or at

his feet, but if maladye distourbid it; for he schal take no keep who sittith there, but in whos place that he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and cometh for to axe him of mercy and to maken his accord, and settith him doun anoon by the lord, men wolde holde him outrageous, and not worthy so soone for to have mercy ne remissioun. The thridde signe is, that thy schrifte schulde be ful of teeris, if men may wepe; and if he may not wepe with his bodily eyen, let him wepe with his herte. Such was the confessioun of seint Peter; for after that he hadde forsake Jhesu Crist, he wente out and wepte ful bitterly. The ferthe signe is, that he lette nought for schame to schryve him and to schewen his confessioun. Such was the confessioun of Magdaleyn, that spared for no schame of hem that were at the feste to go to oure Lord Jhesu Crist and byknowe to him hire synne. The fifte signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisaunt to resceyve the penaunce that him is enjoyned. For certis Jhesu Crist for the gultes of oon man was obedient to his deth.

The other condicioun of verray confessioun is, that it hastily be doon; for certes, if a man had a dedly wounde, ever the lenger that he taried to warisch himself, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deth, and eek the wounde wolde be the worse to hele. And right so fareth synne, that long tyme is in a man unschewed. Certes a man oughte soone schewe his synne for many causes; as for drede of deth, that cometh sodeinly, and not certeyn what tyme it schal come, or ben in what place; and eek the drecchyng of

oon synne draweth another; and eek the lenger he tarieth, the ferther is he from Crist. And if he abyde unto his laste day, skarsly may he schrive him or remembre him of his synnes, or repente for the grevous malady of his deth. And for as moche as he hath not in his lif herkened Jhesu Crist, whan he hath spoken, he schal crien to Jhesu Crist at his laste day, and scarsly wol he herken him. And understonde that this condicioun moste have foure thinges. First that thy schrifte moste ben purveyed byforn, and avysed, for wikked haste doth no profyt; and that a man can schryve him of his synnes, be it of pride or of envye, and so forth alle the spices and the circumstaunces; and that he have comprehendid in his mynde the nombre and the gretnes of his synne, and how longe he hath lyen in synne; and eek that he be contrit of his sinnes, and in stedefast purpos (by the grace of God) never eft to falle in synne; and eek that he drede and countrewayte himself, and that he flee the occasiouns of synne, to whiche he is enclyned. Also that thou schalt schrive the of alle thin synnes to oon man, and nat a parcel to oon man, and a parcel to another man; that is, understonde, in entent to parte thy confessioun as for schame or drede, for it nys but strangelyng of thy soule. For certes, Jhesu Crist is enterely al good, in him is noon imperfeccioun, and therfore outher he forgiveth al parfitely, or elles never a del. I say nought, if thou be assigned to thy penitencere for certein synne, that thou art bounde to schewe him al the remenaunt of thy synnes, of whiche thou hast ben schryven of thy

curate, but if it like the of thin humilité; this is no departyng of schrifte. Ne I ne say not, there as I speke of divisioun of confessioun, that if thou have licence to schryve the to a discret and to an honest prest, wher the likith, and eek by the licence of thy curate, that thou ne maist wel schrive the to him of alle thyn synnes; but let no synne be byhinde untold as fer as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou schalt be schrive of thi curate, telle him eeke al thy synne that thou hast doon sith thou were last i-schryvne. This is no wikkid entent of divisioun of schrifte.

Also thy verrey schrifte askith certeyn condiciouns. First, that thou schrive the by thy fre wille, nought constreyned, ne for schame of folk, ne for maladye, or such thing; for it is resoun, that he that trespassith with his fre wille, that by his fre wille he confesse his trespas; and that noon other man schal telle his synne but himself; ne he schal not nayte or denye his synne, ne wraththe him with the prest for his amonestynge to lete synne. The secounde condicioun is, that thy schrifte be laweful, that is to sayn, that thou that schrivest the, and eek the prest that herith thy confessioun, ben verrayly in the feith of holy chirche, and that a man be nought despaired of the mercy of Jhesu Crist, as Caym or Judas. And eek a man moot accuse himself of his owne trespas and not another; but he schal blame and wite himself of his oughne malice of his synne, and noon other. But natheless, if that another man be occasioun or ellis enticer of his synne, or that the estate of a persone be such thurgh which his

synne aggreggith, or elles that he may not playnly schryve hym but he telle the person with which he hath synned, thanne may he telle it, so that his entent be nought to bakbyte the persone, but oonly to declare his confessioun.

Thow schalt nought eke make no lesyng in thy confessioun for humilité, peradventure to sayn that thou hast don synnes of whiche thou were never gulty; as seint Augustyn saith, if thou bycause of humilité makest lesynges on thiself, though thou were not in synne biforn, yit art thou thanne in synne thurgh thy lesynges. Thou most also schewe thy synne by thyn oughne proper mouth, but thou woxe dombe, and not by no lettre; for thou that hast don the synne, thou schalt have the schame of the confessioun. Thou schalt nought peynte thy confessioun, by faire subtil wordes, to cover the more thy synne; for thanne bigilist thou thiself, and not the prest; thou most telle it platly, be it never so foul ne so horrible. Thou schalt eek schrive the to a prest that is discrete to counsaile the; and thou schalt nought schryve the for veineglorie, ne for ypocrisie, ne for no cause but oonly for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the hele of thy soul. Thou schalt not eek renne to the prest sodeinly, to telle him lightly thy synne, as who tellith a tale or a jape, but avysily and with gret devocioun; and generally schrive the ofte; if thou ofte falle, ofte thou arise by confessioun. And though thou schryve the ofter than oones of synne of which thou hast ben schriven, it is the more merite; and, as saith seint Augustyn, thou schalt have

the more lightly relessyng and grace of God, bothe of synne and of payne. And certes oones a yer atte lest way it is laweful to be houselyd, for sothely oones a yer alle thinges in the erthe renovelen.

De tertia parte penitentiæ.

Now have I told of verray confessioun, that is the secounde partye of penitence. The thridde partye of penitence is satisfaccioun, and that stondith generally in almesdede and bodily peyne. Now ben ther thre maner of almesdede; contricioun of herte, where a man offereth himself to God; the secounde is, to have pité of the defaute of his neighebor; the thridde is, in geving of good counseil and comfort, gostly and bodily, where men han neede, and namely in sustenaunce of mennes foode. And take keep that a man hath neede of these thinges generally, he hath neede of foode, of clothing, and of herberwe, he hath neede of charitable counseil and visityng in prison and malady, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thou may not visite the needeful with thy persone, visite by thy message and by thy giftes. These ben general almesses or werkes of charité, of hem that han temporal riches or discrecioun in counselynge. Of these werkes schalt thou hieren at the day of doom.

This almes schalt thou doon of thin oughne propur thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou maist; but natheles, if thou maist not do it prively, thou schalt nought forbere to do almes, though men se it, so that it be nought don for thank of the world, but oonly for thonk of Jhesu Crist. For, as witnessith seint Mathewe, c°

v^to^, a cité may not ben hid that is set on a mountayn, ne men light not a lanterne and put it under a buisschel, but men sette it on a candel-stikke, to lighte the men in the hous; right so schal youre light lighten biforn men, that they may se youre goode werkes, and glorifien youre Fader that is in heven.

Now as to speke of bodily peyne, it is in prayere, in wakinges, in fastynges, in vertuous techinges. Of orisouns ye schul understonde, that orisouns or prayeres, is for to seyn, a pitous wil of herte, that redressith it in God, and expressith it by word out-ward, to remeve harmes, and to have thinges espirituel and durable, and som tyme temporel thinges. Of whiche orisouns, certes in the orisoun of the Pater-noster hath oure Lord Jhesu Crist enclosed most thinges. Certis it is privileged of thre thinges in his dignité, for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer; for Jhesu Crist himself maked it; and it is schort, for it schulde be coud the more lightly, and for to withholde it the more esily in herte, and helpe himselfe the oftere with this orisoun, and for a man schulde be the lasse wery to say it, and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it, it is so schort and so easy; and for it comprehendith in itself alle goode prayeres. The exposicioun of this holy praier, that is so excellent and so digne, I bitake to these maystres of theology, save thus moche wol I sayn, whan thou prayest that God schulde forgive the thy gultes as thou forgivest hem that they gulten to the, be ful wel ware that thou be not out of charité. This holy orisoun amenisith eek venial synne, and therfore it appendith specially to penitence

This praier moste be trewely sayd, and in verray faith, and that men pray to God ordinatly, discretly, and devoutly; and alway a man schulde putte his wille to be subject to the wille of God. This orisoun moste eek be sayd with greet humblesse and ful pure, and honestly, and nought to the annoyaunce of eny man or womman. It most eek be continued with the werkis of charité. It avaylith agayns the vices of the soule; for, as seith seint Jerom, by fastyng ben saved the vices of fleissch, and by prayere the vices of the soule.

After this thou schalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakyng. For Jhesu Crist saith, wakith and prayeth, that ye ne entre not into temptacioun. Ye schul understonde also, that fastynge stont in thre thinges, in forbering of bodily mete and drink, and in forberyng of worldly jolité, and in forbering of worldly synne; this is to sayn, that a man schal kepe him fro dedly synne in al that he may.

And thou schalt understonde eek, that God ordeyned fastyng, and to fastyng appurteynen foure thinges: largesce to pover folk; gladnes of hert espirituel; not to ben angry ne annoyed ne grucche for he fastith; and also resonable hour for to ete by mesure, that is to sayn, a man schulde not ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his mele, for he fastith.

Thanne schal thou understonde, that bodily peyne stant in discipline, or teching, by word, or by writyng, or by ensample. Also in weryng of heires or of stamyn or of habejeons on her naked fleisch for Cristes sake, and suche maner penaunce; but ware the wel that such

maner penaunce of thyn fleissch make nought thin herte bitter or angry, or anoyed of thiself; for better is to cast away thin hayre than for to caste away the swetnes of oure Lord Jhesu Crist. And therfore seith seint Poule, clothe yow, as thay that ben chosen of God in herte, of misericorde, debonaireté, sufferaunce, and such maner of clothing, of the which Jhesu Crist is more appayed than of haires or of hauberkis.[35]

Than is discipline eek in knokking on the brest, in scourgyng with yerdes, in knelynges, in tribulaciouns, in suffring paciently wronges that ben doon to him and eek in pacient sufferaunce of maledies, or lesyng of worldly catel, or of wif, or of child, or of othir frendes.

Thanne schalt thou understonde whiche thinges destourben penaunce, and this is in foure thinges; that is drede, schame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacioun. And for to speke first of drede, for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce, ther agayns is remedye for to thinke, that bodily penaunce, is but schort and litel at the regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lastith withouten ende.

Now agains the schame that a man hath to schryve him, and namely these ypocrites, that wolde be holde so parfyt, that thay have no neede to schryve hem, agayns that schame schulde a man thinke, that by way of resoun he that hath not ben aschamed to do foule thinges, certis him oughte not be aschamed to doon faire thinges and goode thinges, and that is confessioun. A man

[35] *hauberkis.* Tyrwhitt reads, *habergeons.*

scholde eek thinke, that God seeth and knoweth alle thy thoughtes and thy werkes; to him may no thing be hyd ne covered. Men schulde eek remembre hem of the schame that is to come at the day of doom, to hem that ben nought penitent and schriven in this present lif; for alle the creatures in heven, and in erthe, and in helle, schuln seen apertly al that he hydith in this world.

Now for to speke of hem, that ben so negligent and slowe to schryve hem; that stant in tuo maneres. That oon is, that he hopith for to lyve longe, and for to purchace moche riches for his delyt, and thanne he wol schrive him; and, as he saith, he may, as him semith, tymely y-nough come to schrifte; another is, the surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. Agains the firste vice, he schal thinke that oure lif is in no sikernesse, and eek that al the riches in this world ben in adventure, and passen as a schadowe on the wal; and, as saith seint Gregory, that it apperteyneth to the grete rightwisnes of God, that never schal the peyne stynte of hem, that never wolde withdrawe hem fro synne her thankes, but ay continue in synne; for thilke perpetuel wille to doon synne schul thay have perpetuel peyne.

Wanhope is in tuo maneres. The firste wanhope is, in the mercy of Crist; that other is, that thay thinke thay mighte nought longe persever in goodnesse. The firste wanhope cometh of that, he demyth that he synned so highly and so ofte, and so longe layn in synne, that he schal not be saved. Certis agens that cursed wanhope schulde he thenke, that the passioun of

Jhesu Crist is more strong for to unbynde, than synne is strong for to bynde. Agains the secounde wanhope he schal thinke, that als ofte as he fallith, he may arise agayn by penitence; and though he never so longe have leyn in synne, the mercy of Crist is alway redy to resceyve him to mercy. Agains the wanhope that he thinkith he schulde not longe persevere in goodnesse, he schal thinke that the febles of the devel may no thing doon, but men wol suffre him; and eek he schal have strengthe of the help of God, and of al holy chirche, and of the protecciouu of aungels, if him list.

Thanne schal men understonde, what is the fruyt of penaunce; and after the word of Jhesu Crist, it is the endeles blisse of heven, ther joye hath no contrarieté of wo ne of penaunce ne grevance; ther alle harmes ben passed of this present lif; ther as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle; there as is the blisful compagnye, that rejoycen hem evermo everich of otheres joye; ther as the body of man, that whilom was foule and derke, is more clere than the sonne; ther as the body of man that whilom was seek and frel, feble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hool, that ther may no thing empeire it; ther nys neyther honger, ne thurst, ne colde, but every soule replenisched with the sight of the parfyt knowyng of God. This blisful regne may men purchace by poverte espirituel, and the glorie by lowenes, the plenté of joye by hunger and thurst, and reste by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortificacioun of synne; to which life he us bringe, that bought us with his precious blood. Amen.

Preces de Chauceres.[36]

Now pray I to yow alle that heren this litel tretis or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that likes hem, that therof thay thanke oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedith alle witte and al goodnes; and if ther be eny thing that displesith hem, I pray hem that thay arette it to the defaute of myn unconnyng, and not to my wille, that wolde fayn have sayd better if I hadde connyng; for the book saith, al that is writen for oure doctrine is writen. Wherfore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of God that ye pray for me, that God have mercy on me and forgeve me my giltes, and nameliche my translaciouns and of endityng in worldly vanitees, whiche I revoke in my retracciouns, as is the book of Troyles, the book also of Fame, the book of twenty-five Ladies, the book of the Duchesses, the book of seint Valentines day and of the Parliment of briddes, the Tales of Caunturbury, alle thilke that sounen into synne, the book of the Leo, and many other bokes, if thay were in my mynde or re-

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[36] *Preces de Chauceres.* I have printed the celebrated prayer which concludes the Canterbury Tales, exactly as it stands in the Harleian Manuscript. In some manuscripts it is given as though it were the conclusion of the tale or discourse of the Parson, but in others, as here, it is distinctly given to Chaucer himself. It varies much in the different manuscripts, and there are many circumstances about it which it seems impossible to explain satisfactorily. Tyrwhitt attempts to get over a part of the difficulty by supposing that the prayer was really the conclusion of the Parson's Tale, and that the middle portion, *Wherfore I beseke yow....the seintes in heven*, including the list of Chaucer's works, was added subsequently by a scribe who chose to put the prayer into Chaucer's own mouth, and wished to make the poet apologize for the looseness of some of his writings.

membraunce, and many a song and many a leccherous lay, of the whiche Crist for his grete mercy forgive me the synnes. But of the translacioun of Boce de consolacioun, and other bokes of consolacioun and of legend of lyves of seints, and Omelies, and moralitees, and devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and his moder, and alle the seintes in heven, bisekyng hem that thay fro hennysforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to biwayle my gultes, and to studien to the savacioun of my soule, and graunte me grace and space of verray repentaunce, penitence, confessioun, and satisfaccioun, to don in this present lif, thurgh the benigne grace of him, that is king of kynges and prest of alle prestis, that bought us with his precious blood of his hert, so that I moote be oon of hem at the day of doom that schal be saved; *qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*

THE END OF THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE SUPPLEMENTARY TALE,

PRINTED FIRST BY URRY.*

THE PROLOGE TO THE MERCHAUNTES SECOND TALE.

When all this fresh feleship were com to Cantirbury,
As ye have herde tofore, with talys glad and mery;
Som of sotill sentence of vertue and of lore,
And som of othir mirthis, for them that hold no store
Of wisdom, ne of holynes, ne of chivalry,
Nethir of vertuouse matere, but to foly
Leyd wit and lustis all to such japis
As Hurlewaynes meyné in every hegg that rapes,[8]
Thorough unstabill mynde, ryght as the levis grene
Stonden ageyn the wedir, ryght so by them I mene.
But no more hereof nowe at this ilche tyme,
In saving of my sentence, my prolog, and my ryme.

* In printing this Supplement, which Urry gave from a MS. then in the posession of Lady Thynne, but of the existence of which I am not now aware, I follow his text with only the corrections that are self-evident. Urry was equally ignorant of the language and of the literature of the period, and he not only often misread his original, but he introduced foolish alterations of his own.

[8] *Hurlewaynes meyné.* This is a curious allusion to one of the popular legends of the Middle Ages, that of the fairy hunters, who were conceived to be the followers of a goblin leader named Hurlewayn. Under this name it seems to be a legend brought over by the Normans, as it is termed in the old French *maisnie Hellequin*, and in Latin *familia Harlequini*. Walter Mapes, de Nugis Curialium, p. 14, has preserved what seems to have been the English legend on the subject, as it existed in the twelfth century on the borders of Wales.

They toke their in and loggit them at mydmorowe, I trowe,
Atte Cheker of the Hope that many a man doth knowe.
Their hoost of Southworke that with them went, as ye have herde tofore,
That was rewler of them al, of las and eke of more,
Ordeyned their dyner wisely, or they to chirch went,
Such vitaillis as he fonde in town, and for noon othir sent.
The pardonere behelde the besynes, how statis wer i-servid,
Diskennyng hym al prively, and asyde swervid;
The hostelere was so halowid fro o plase to another,
He toke his staffe to the tapstere; "welcom myne own brother,"
Quod she, with a frendly loke al redy for to kys;
And he, as a man i-lerned of such kyndnes,
Bracyd hir by the myddyll and made hir gladly chere,
As thoughe he had i-knowen hir al the rathir yeer.
She halid hym into the tapstry there hir bed was makid;
"Lo here I ligg," quod she, "myself al nyght al nakid,
Without mannys company, syn my love was dede,
Jenkyn Harpour, yf ye hym knewe, from fete to the hede
Was not a lustier persone to daunce ne to lepe,
Then he was, thoughe I it sey;" and therwith to wepe
She made, and with hir napron feir and white y-wash
She wypid soft hir eyen for teris that she out lash,
As grete as any mylstone up-ward gon they stert,
For love of her swetyng, that sat so nighe hir hert.
She wept, and waylid, and wrong hir hondis, and made much to done;

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[14] *Cheker of the Hope.* The inn said to have been that to which the pilgrims resorted, is still pointed out in Canterbury, at the corner of High Street and Mercery Lane. A considerable part of the structure appears to be quite as old as the time of Chaucer, and it is often mentioned in the corporation records under the title of the Chequer. It is situated in the immediate vicinity of the cathedral, and therefore appropriately for the reception of pilgrims.

For they that loven so passyngly such trowes they have echon
She sniffith, sighith, and shoke hire hede, and made rouful cher :—
"*Benedicite*," quod the pardonere, and toke hire by the swere,
"Yee make sorowe i-nowgh," quod he, "your life though ye shuld lese!"
"It is no wondir," quod she than, and therwith she gan to snese.
"Aha! al hole," quod the pardoner, "your pennaunce is somewhat passid!"
"God forbede it els!" quod she, "but it were somwhat lassid;
I myght nat lyve els, thowe wotist, and it shuld long endure."
"Now blessid be God of mendemente of hele and eke of cure!"
Quod the pardoner tho anoon, and toke hir by the chynne,
And sayd to hir these wordis tho, "alas! that love is syn!
So kynd a lover as yee be oon, and so trew of herte!
For be my trewe conscience yit for yowe I smerte,
And shall this month hereafter for your soden disese;
Now wele wer hym ye lovid, so he coud you plese.
I durst swere upon a book that trewe he shuld yowe fynd;
For he that is so yore dede is grene in your mynd.
Ye made me a sory man, I dred ye wold have stervid."
"Graunt mercy, gentil sir!" quod she, "that yee unaservid;
Yee be a nobile man, i-blessid mut yee be!
Sit down, ye shul drynk."—"Nay, i-wis," quod he,
"I am fastyng yit, myne own hertis rote."
"Fastyng yit, alas!" quod she, "therof I can gode bote."
She stert into the town, and fet a py al hote,
And set tofore the pardonere. "Jenken, I ween I note,
Is that your name I yow prey?" "Ye i-wis, myne own sustir;
So was I enformyd of them that did me fostir.
And what is yowrs?" "Kitt, i-wis; so cleped me my dame."

"And Goddis blessing have thow, Kitt; now broke wel thy name."
And privylich unlasid his both eyen liddes,
And lokid hir in the visage par amour amyddis;
And sighed therewith a litil time, that she it here myghte,
And gan to rown and seyn this song, *Now love then do me righte.*
"Ete and be merry," quod she, "why breke ye nowt your fast?
To wait more feleship it were but work in waste.
Whi make ye so dull chere? for your love at home?"
"Nay forsooth, myne own hert, it is for yow aloon."
"For me? alas! what sey ye? that wer a simple prey."
"Trewlich yit," quod the pardonere, "it is as I yowe sey."
"Ye, etith, and beth mery, we wol speke thereof sone;
Brennyd cat dredith feir; it is mery to be aloon.
For by our lady Mary, that bare Jesus on hir arm,
I coud nevir love yit but it did me harm;
For evir my manere hath be to love ovirmuch."
"Now Cristis blessing," quod the pardonere, "go with al such!
Lo how the clowdis worchyn, ech man to mete his mach.
For trewly, gentil cristian, I use the same tach,
And have y-do many a yer; I may it nat forbere;
For kynd woll have his cours, though men the contrary swere."
And therewith he stert up smertly, and cast down a grote,
"What shal this do, gentil sir? nay sir, for my cote,

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[78] *Brennyd cat dredith feir.* A very old proverb, the more usual form of which, as it still exists in English and French, is, The cat that is scalded dreads cold water. In a collection of French proverbs of the thirteenth century, we have, *chat eschaudez iaue creint.*

[86] *kynd woll have his cours.* Another popular proverb that is not yet forgotten.

I nold ye payd a peny her, and so sone pas."
The pardoner swore his grett othe, he wold pay no las.
" I-wis, sir, it is ovirdo, but sith it is yŏwr will,
I woll putt it in my purse, lest yee it take in ill
To refuse your curtesy ;" and therewith she gan to bowe.
"Now trewly," quod the pardoner, "your maners been to lowe.
For had ye countid streytly, and nothing left behind,
I might have wele y-demed that yee be unkind,
And eke untrewe of hert, and sooner me forgete ;
But ye list be my tresorer, for we shall offter mete."
" Now, certen," quod the tapster, " ye have a redeful even,
As wold to God ye couth as wele undo my sweven
That I myself did mete this nyght that is y-passid,
How I was in a chirch, when it was all y-massid ;
And was in my devocioune tyl service was al doon,
Tyl the preest and the clerk boystly bad me goon,
And put me out of the chirch with an egir mode."
" Now, seynt Daniel," quod the pardonere, " your swevyn turn to gode !
And I woll halsow it to the best, have it in your mynd ;
For comynly of these swevyngs the contrary men shul fynd.
Ye have be a lover glad, and litil joy y-had ;
Pluck up a lusty hert, and be mery and glad,
For ye shul have an husbond, that shall yowe wed to wyve,
That shal love yowe as hertly as his own lyve.
The preest that put yow out of chirch shall lede you in ageyne,
And helpe to your mariage with al his might and main.
This is the sweven al and som, Kit, how likith the ?"
" Be my trowith, wondir wele ; blessid mut thowe be !"

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[106] *seynt Daniel.* There is a peculiar appropriateness in this ejaculation ; in holy writ, Daniel is remarkable for his interpretations of dreams, and the popular works on dreams and their significations current in the middle ages went under the name of the prophet by whom they were believed to have been originally written.

Then toke he leve at that tyme, tyll he come efftsone,
And went to his feleship, as it was to doon.
Thoughe it be no grete holynes to prech this ilk matere,
And that som list to her it, yit, sirs, ner the latter
Endurith for a while, and suffrith them that woll,
And ye shull her how the tapster made the pardoner pull
Garlik all the long nyghte til it was ner end day;
For the more chere she made of love, the falser was her lay
But litil charge gaff she theroff, tho she aquit his while,
For ethiris thought and tent was othir to begile;
And ye shul here hereaftir, when tyme comith and spase
To meve such matere; but now a litil spase
I wol return me ageyn to the company,
The knyghte and al the feleship; and nothing for to ly,
Whan they wer al y-loggit, as skil wold and reson,
Everich aftir his degré, to chirch then was seson
To pas and to wend, to make their offringis,
Righte as their devocioune was, of silver broch and ryngis.
Then at chirch dorr the curtesy gan to ryse,
Tyl the knyght, of gentilnes that knewe right wel the guyse,
Put forth the prelatis, the parson and his fere.
A monk, that took the spryngill with a manly chere,
And did as the manere is, moilid al thir patis,
Everich aftir othir, righte as they wer of statis.
The frer feynyd fetously the spryngill for to hold
To spryng oppon the remnaunt; that for his cope he nold
Have laft that occupacioune in that holy plase;
So longid his holy conscience to se the nonnis fase.
The knyght went with his compers toward the holy shryne,
To do that they wer com for, and aftir for to dyne,
The pardoner and the miller, and othir lewde sotes,
Sought hemself in the chirch, right as lewd gotes,
Pyrid fast and pourid high upon the glase,

Counterfetyng gentilman the armys for to blase,
Diskyvering fast the peyntur, and for the story mournid,
And ared al so right as rammys hornyd.
"He berith a balstaff," quod the toon, "and els a rakid end."
"Thow failest," quod the miller, "thow hast nat wel thy mynd;
It is a spere, yf thow canst se, with a prik tofore,
To bush a down his enmy and through the shoulder bore."
"Pese!" quod the hoost of Southwork, "let stond the wyndow glasid,
Goith up and doith your offerynge, ye semith half amasid;
Sith ye be in company of honest men and good,
Worchith somwhat aftir them, and let the kynd of brode
Pas for a tyme, I hold it for the best;
For who doith after company may live the bet in rest."
Then passid they forth boystly, gogling with their hedis,
Knelid adown tofore the shrine, and hertlich their bedis
They preyd to seint Thomas, in such wyse as they couth;
And sith the holy relikes ech man with his mowith
Kissid, as a goodly monk the names told and taught.
And sith to othir places of holynes they raught,
And wer in their devocioune tyl service wer al doon.
And sith they drowgh to dyner-ward, as it drew to noon.
Then, as manere and custom is, signes there they bought;
For men of contré shuld know whome they had sought.
Eche man set his silver in such thing as they likid.
And in the meen while the miller had y-pikid
His bosom ful of signys of Canterbury brochis;

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152 *al so right as rammys hornyd.* A proverbial phrase that appears to have been very popular in the fifteenth century, and is made the burthen of one of Lydgate's poems. See Halliwell's edition of Lydgate, p. 171.

175 *signys of Canterbury brochis.* It was a common practice with pilgrims to purchase at the shrine they visited leaden brooches, representing usually the figure of the saint, and serving afterwards as signs of

Though the pardoner and he pryvely in hir pouchis
They put them afterwards, that noon of them it wist,
Save the sompner seid somwhat, and seyd to he list,
"Halff part!" quod he, pryvely rownyng on their ere.
"Husht, pees!" quod the miller, "seist thow nat the frere,
How he lowrith undir his hood with a doggish eye?
Hit shuld be privy thing that he coud nat aspy;
Of every craft he can somwhat, our lady give hym sorowe!"
"Amen," tho quod the sompner, "on eve and eke on morowe.
So cursid a tale he told of me, the devill of hell hym spede!
And me! but yf I pay him wele and quyte wele his mede,
Yf it hap hom-ward that ech man tell his tale,
As we did hither-ward, though we shuld set at sale
All the shrewdnes that I can, I woll hym nothing spare,
That I nol touch his takerd somwhat of his care!"
They set their signys upon their hedes, and som oppon their capp,
And sith to the dyner-ward they gan for to stapp;
Every man in his degré wissh and toke his sete,
As they wer wont to doon at soper and at mete;

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their pilgrimage. Many of these leaden signs had been found, especially in rivers, such as the Thames, the river at Canterbury, etc., and antiquaries were in the dark as to their purpose. This has, however, been very clearly shown in a series of papers on the subject by Mr. C. Roach Smith, in his *Collectanea Antiqua*. The annexed figure of a veritable "Canterbury brooch", is taken from one engraved in the *Archæological Album*, p. 21; it is in lead, and represents the head of St. Thomas of Canterbury, with the inscription CAPUT THOME. The whole of this passage is a very curious picture of the manners of the time. Erasmus, in his "Pilgrimage for Religion's sake", describes the pilgrim as "covered with scallop shells, *stuck all over with leaden and tin figures*, adorned with straw necklaces, and a bracelet of serpents' eggs."

And wer in silence for a tyme, tyl good ale gan arise,
And then, as nature axith, as these old wise
Knowen wele, when venys been somwhat replete,
The spirits wol stere, and also metes swete
Causen oft myrthis for to be y-mevid,
And eke it was no tyme tho for to be y-grevid.
Every man in his wise made hertly chere,
Telling his felowe of sportys and of chere,
And of other mirthis that fellyn by the wey,
As custom is of pylgryms, and hath been many a dey.
The hoost leid to his ere, of Southworke as ye knowe,
And thenkid al the company both high and lowe,
So wele kepeing the covenaunt, in Southwork that was made,
That every man shuld by the wey with a tale glade
All the whole company, in shorting of the wey;
"And al is wele performed, but than now thus I sey,
That we must so home-ward ech man tel anothir,
Thus we wer accordit, and I shuld be a rathir
To set yewe in governaunce by rightful jugement."
"Trewly, hoost," quod the frer, "that was all our assent,
With a litil more that I shall sey therto.
Yee graunted of your curtesy that we shuld also
All the hole company sope with yowe at nyght;
Thus I trow that it was, what sey you, sir knyght?"
"It shal nat nede," quod the hoost, "to axe no witnes;
Your record is good i-nowe; and of your gentilnes
Yit I prey yow efft ageyn; for, by seynt Thomas shryne!
And ye woll hold covenaunt, I woll hold myne."
"Now trewly, hoost," quod the knyght, "ye have right wel
y-seyd;
And as towching my persone, I holde me payde;
And so I trowe that al doith; sirs, what seye ye?"
The monk and eke the marchaunte and al seyd, "ye".

"Then al this aftir-mete I hold it for the best
To sport and pley us," quod the hoost, "ech man as hym lest,
And go by tyme to soper and to bed also;
So mowe we erly rysen, our jorney for to do."
The knyght arose therwithal, and cast on a fresher gown,
And his sone anothir, to walk in the town.
And so did all the remnaunt that wer of that aray,
That had their chaungis with them, they made them fresh and gay;
Sortid them togithir, right as their lustis lay,
As they were more usid travelling by the way.
The knyght with his meyné went to see the walle,
And the wards of the town, as to a knyght befalle;
Devising ententiflich the strengthis al about,
And apointid to his sone the perell and the dout,
For shot of arblast and of bowe, and eke for shot of gonne,
Unto the wardis of the town, and how it might be wone;
And al defence ther-ageyn, aftir his intent,
He declarid compendiously, and al that evir he ment,
He sone perseyvid every poynt, as he was full abil,
To armes and to travaile and persone covenabill,
He was of all factur aftir fourm of kynd,
And for to deme his governaunce it semed that his mynd
Was much in his lady that he lovid best;
That made him offt to wake when he shuld have his rest.
The clerk that was of Oxenforth onto the sompnore seyd,
"Me semeth of grete clergé that thow art a mayde;
For thou puttest on the frer in maner of repreff,
That he knoweth falshede, vice, and eke a theff.
And I it hold vertuose and right commendabill
To have very knowlech of things reprovabill.

For who so may eschew it, and let it pas by,
And els he myght fall theron unward and sodenly.
And thoughe the frer told a tale of a sompnour,
Thow oughtist for to take it for no dishonour;
For of al craftis and of eche degré
They be not al perfite, but som nyce be."
"Lo what is worthy," seyd the knyght, "for to be a clerk.
To sommon among us them this mocioune was ful derke;
I comend his wittis and eke his clergé;
For of ether parte he saveth honesté."
The monk toke the parsone then and the grey frer"
And preyd them for curtesy for to go in fere.
"I have ther acquaintaunce, that al this yeris thre
Hath preyd hym by his lettris that I hym wold se;
And ye my brothir in habit and in possessioune.
And now I am here, methinkith it is to doon,
To preve it in dede what chere he wold me make,
And to yow my friende also, for my sake."
They went forth togithir talking of holy matere;
But woot ye wele, in certeyn, they had no mind on watere
To drink at that tyme, when they wer met in fere;
For of the best that myght be founde and therwith mery chere
They had, it is no doute, for spycys and eke wine
Went round about the gastoyn, and eke the ruyne.
The wyfe of Bath was so wery, she had no wyl to walk;
She toke the priores by the honde; "Madam, wol ye stalk
Pryvely into the garden to se the herbis growe?
And aftir with our hostis wife in hir parlour rowe?
I wol gyve yowe the wyne, and ye shul me also.
For tyl we go to soper we have naught ellis to do."
The priores, as woman taught of gentil blood and hend,
Assentid to hir counsel; and forth gon they wend,

Passyng forth sofftly into the herbery ;
For many a herb grew for sewe and surgery ;
And all the aleys feir and parid, and raylid, and y-makid ;
The savige and the isope y-frethid and y-stakid ;
And othir beddis by and by fresh y-dight,
For comers to the hooste righte a sportful sight.
The marchaunt, and the mancipill, the miller, and the reve,
And the clerk of Oxenforth, to town-ward gan they meve ;
And al the othir meyné ; and lafft noon at home,
Save the pardoner, that pryvelich when al they wer goon
Stalkid into the tapstry ; for nothing wold he leve,
To make his covenaunte in certeyn the same eve,
He wold be loggit with hir, that was his hole ententioune.
But hap and eke fortune and all the constellacioune
Was clere hym ageyns, as ye shul aftir here.
For hym had better be y-loggit al nyght in a myere,
Then he was the same nyght or the sun was up ;
For such was his fortune, he drank without the cupp,
But thereof wist he no dele ; ne no man of us alle
May have that high connyng, to know what shal befalle.
He stappid into the tapstry wondir pryvely,
And fond hir ligging lirylong with half slopy eye,
Pourid fellich undir hir hood, and sawe al his comyng,
And lay ay still, as naught she knewe, but feynid hir slepyng.
He put his hond to hir brest, "Awake," quod he, "awake!"
"A! *benedicite*, sir, who wist yow her? out tho I myght be take
Prisoner," quod the tapstere, "being al aloon ;"
And therwith breyd up in a frite, and began to groon.
"Now, sith ye be my prisoner, yeld yow now," quod he.
"I must nedis," quod she, "I may nothyng fle ;
And eek I have no strength and am but yong of age,
And also it is no mastry to cach a mouse in a cage,

That may no where stert out, but closid wondir fast;
And eke, sir, I tell yow, though I had grete hast,
Ye shuld have coughed when ye com; wher lern you curtesy?
Now trewlich I must chide, for of right pryvety
Women ben som tyme of day, when they be aloon.
Wher coud I yow prey when ye com efftsone?"
"Nowe, mercy! dere swetyng, I wol do so no more;
I thank you an hundrit sithis; and also by your lore
I wol do hereaftir in what plase that I com.
But lovers, Kitt, ben evil avysid ful oft and to lom.
Wherfor I prey you hertlich hold me excusid,
And I behote yow trewly it shall no more be usid.
But now to our purpose; how have ye fare,
Sith I was wyth you last? that is my most care.
For yf yee eylid eny thing othir wise then good,
Trewly it wold chaunge my chere and my blood."
"I have farid the wers for yowe," quod Kitt, "do ye no drede
God that is above! and eke ye had no nede
For to congir me, God woot, wyth your nygromancy,
That have no more to vaunte me but oonly my body;
And yf it were disteynid, then wer I ondo;
I-wis I trowe, Jenkyn, ye be nat to trust to.
For evir more ye clerkis con so much in book,
Yee wol wynn a woman at first look."
Thought the pardonere, this goith wele; and made his better chere,
And axid of hir, softly, "Love, who shall ligg here
This nyght that is to comyng? I prey yowe tell me."
"I-wis it is grete nede to tell yowe," quod she:
"Make it nat overqueynt, though yow be a clerk,
Ye knowe wele i-nough, i-wis, by loke, by word, by work."
"Shal I com than, christian, and fese awey the cat?"
"Shal ye com? *per benedicite*, what question is that?

Wherfor I prey you hertly to be my counsail ;
Comyth somwhat late, and for nothing faill ;
The dorr shall stond thar up ; put it from yow soft.
But be wele avysid ye wake nat them on lofft."
" Care ye nat," quod Jenkin, " I can theron at best ;
Shal no man for my stepyng be wakid of his rest."
Anoon they dronk the beverage, and wer of oon accord,
As it semed by their chere, and also by their word ;
And al a staunce she lovid hym wele, she toke hym by the swere,
As though he had lernyd cury favel of som old frere ;
The pardoner plukkid out of his purs, I trow, the dowry,
And toke it Kitt, in hir hond, and bad her pryvely
To orden a rere sopor for them both to,
A cawdell y-made with swete wyne, and with sugir also ;
" For, trewly, I have no talent to ete in your absence ;
So longith my hert to-ward yow to be in yowr presence."
He toke his leve, and went his wey as though nothing wer,
And met wyth al the felship ; but in what plase ne wher
He spake no word therof, but held hym close and styll ;
As he that hopid sikirlich to have had al his wyll ;
And thought many a mery thought by hymself aloon ;
" I am a-loggit," thought he, " best, how soevir it goon ;
And thoughe it have costid me, yit wol I do my peyn
For to pike hir purs to nyghte, and win my cost ageyn."
Now leve I the pardonere tyll that it be eve,
And wol returne me ageyn righte ther as I did leve.
Whan al wer com togithir in their herbegage,
The hoost of Southwork, as ye knowe, that had no spice of rage,
But al thing wrought prudenciall, as sobir man and wise,
" Now wol we to the soup, sir knyght, seith your avyse,"
Quod the hoost ful curteysly ; and in the same wise

The knyght answerd him ageyn, "Sir, as ye devyse,
I must obey, ye woot wele; but yf I faill wytt,
Then takith these prelatis to yowe, and washith, and go sit;
For I woll be yowr marchall, and serve yowe echone,
And then the officers and I to soper shall we gone."
They wissh, and sett right as he bad, eche man wyth his fere,
And begonne to talk of sportis and of chere,
That they had the aftir-mete whiles they wer out;
For othir occupacioune, tyll they wer servid about,
They had nat at that tyme, but eny man kitt a loff.
But the pardoner kept hym close, and told nothing of
The myrth and hope that he had, but kept it for hymself;
And thoughe he did, it is no fors; for he had nede to solve
Long or it wer mydnyght, as ye shul her sone;
For he met with his love in crokeing of the moon.
They wer y-servyd honestly, and eche man held hym payde;
For of o manere of service their soper was araide,
As skill wold and reson, sith the lest of all
Payid y-like much, for growing of the gall.
But yit as curtesy axith, though it wer som dele streight,
The statis that wer above had of the feyrest endreyte.
Wherfor they did their gentilnes ageyn to all the rout,
They dronken wyne at their cost onys round about.
Now pass I lightly ovir; when they soupid had,
Tho that were of governaunce as wyse men and sad
Went to their rest, and made no more to doon;
But the miller and the coke dronken by the moon
Twyes to eche othir in the repenyng.
And when the pardoner them espyd, anoon he gan to sing,
Doubill me this bourden, chokelyng in his throte;
For the tapster shuld here of his mery note.
He clepid to hym the sompnour, that was his own discipill,
The yeman, and the reve, and the mancipill;

And stoden so holowyng; for nothing wold they leve,
Tyl the tyme that it was well within eve. [both,
The hoost of Southwork herd them wele, and the marchaunt
As they wer at a countis, and wexen somewhat wroth.
But yet they preyd them curteysly to rest for to wend,
And so they did all the rout, they dronk, and made an end.
And eche man droughe to cusky to slepe and take his rest,
Save the pardoner, that drew apart, and weytid by a cheste
For to hide hymself, tyll the candill wer out.

And in the meen while, have ye no doute,
The tapster and hir paramour, and the hosteler of the house,
Sitt togithir pryvelich, and of the best gouse
That was y-found in town and y-set at sale,
They had there of sufficiaunt, and dronk but litill ale;
And sit and ete the cawdell, for the pardoner that was made,
With sugir, and with swete wyne, right as hymself bade:
So he that payd for all in feer had not a twynt;
For offt is more better y-merkid then y-mynt.
And so farid he ful right, as ye have y-herd.
But who is that a woman coud not make his berd,
And she wer therabout, and set hir wytt therto?
Ye woot wele I ly nat, and wher I do or no
I wol nat here termyn it, lest ladies stond in plase,
Or els gentil women, for lesing of my grace
Of daliaunce, and of sportis, and of goodly chere;
Therfor anenst their estatis I wol in no manere
Deme ne determyn, but of lewd kitts,
As tapsters, and othir such that hath wyly wytts,
To pike mennys pursis, and eke to bler their eye;
So wele they make seme soth when they falsest by.
Now of Kitt tapster, and of hir paramour,
And the hosteler of the house that sit in Kittis bour,
When they had ete and dronk right in the same plase,

Kit began to rendir out all thing as it was :
The wowing of the pardoner, and his cost also,
And how he hopid for to lygg al nyght wyth hir also ;
And therof he shall be sikir as of Godis cope.
And sodeynly kissid her paramour ; and seyd, "We shul sclope
Togithir hul by hul, as we have many a nyght ;
And yf he com and make noyse, I prey yowe dub hym knyght!"
"Yes dame," quod hir paramour, "be thow not agast ;
This is his own staff thou seyst, therof he shall a tast."
"Now trewly," quod the hosteler, "and he com by my lot
He shall drink for Kittis love wythout cup or pot ;
And he be so hardy to wake eny gift,
I make a vowe to the pecock, ther shal wake a foul mist!"
And arose up therewithal, and toke his leve anoon ;
It was a shrewid company, they had servid so many oon.
With such manere of feleship ne kepe I never to dele,
Ne no man that lovith his worship and his hele.
Quod Kitt to hir paramour, "Ye must wake a whyle,
For trewlich I am sikir that within this myle
The pardoner wol be comyng his hete to aswage ;
But loke ye pay hym redelich to kele his corage!
And therfor, love, dischance yowe not tyll this chek be do."
"No, for God! Kitt, that wol I no."
Then Kitt went to bed, and blewe out all the light ;
And by that tyme it was ner hond quarter nyght,
Whan all was still, the pardoner gan to walk,
As glad as eny goldfynch, that he herd no man talk ;
And drowghe to Kittis dor-ward to herken and to list,
And went to have fond the dor up by the hasp, and eke the twist

462 *a vowe to the pecock.* The peacock was only brought on the table on festive occasions ; and it was customary for the knight who carved it, to place his hand upon the bird with great ceremony, and make a vow before he began. The vow thus made was considered to be a very solemn one. See, on this subject, Le Grand d'Aussy, *Histoire de la Vie privée des François*, tom. i, p. 365.

Held hym out a while and the lok also ;
Yit trowid he no gile, but went ner to.
And scrapid the dorr welp-lich, and wynyd wyth his mowith,
Aftir a doggis lyden, as nere as he couith.
"¡Awey, dog, with evill deth!" quod he that was within,
And made hym all redy the dorr to unpin.
"A!" thought the pardoner, "tho I trow my berd be made,
The tapster hath a paramour, and hath made them glade
With the cawdell that I ordeyned for me, as I guess ;
Now the devill hir spede, such oon as she is !
She seid I had y-congerid hir, our lady gyve hir sorowe !
Now wold to God she wer in stokis tyl I shuld hir borowe !
For she is the falsest that evir yit I knewe,
To pik the mony out of my purs, Lord ! she made hir trewe!"
And therewyth he caught a cardiakill and a cold sot ;
For who have love-longing and is of corage hote,
He hath ful many a myry thought tofore his delyte ;
And right so had the pardoner, and was in evil plight.
For, fayling of his purpose, he was nothing in ese ;
Wherfor he fill sodenlich into a wood rese ;
Entryng wondir fast into a frensy,
For pur very angir, and for jelousy.
For when he herd a man within, he was almost wood ;
And because the cost was his, no marvel tho the moud
Wer turned into vengaunce, yf it myght be.
But this was the myschief, all so strong as he
Was he that was within, and lighter man also ;
As provid wele the bataile betwene them both to.
The pardonere scrapid efft ageyn, for nothyng wold he blyn ;
So feyn he wold have herd more of hym that was within.
"What dog is that ?" quod the paramour, "Kit, wost thou ere ?"
"Have God my trowith !" quod she, "it is the pardonere."

"The pardoner, with myscheff! God gyve hym evil preff!"
"Sir," she seid, "by my trowith, he is the same theff!"
"Therof thou liest," quod the pardoner, and might nat long forbere,
"A! thy fals body!" quod he, "the devil of hell the tere!
For, by my trowith, a falsher sawe I nevir noon,"
And nempnid hir namys many mo than oon.
Though to rech hir wer noon honesté,
Among men of good of worship and degré.
But shortly to conclude; when he had chid i-nowe,
He axid his staff spitouslich wyth wordis sharp and rowe.
"Go to bed!" quod he within, "no more noyse thow make
Thy staff shal be redy to morowe I undertake."
"In soth," quod he, "I wol nat fro the dorr wend,
Tyl I have my staff, thow bribour!" "Then have the tothir end!"—
Quod he that was within; and leyd it on his bak,
Right in the same plase as chapmen berith their pak;
And so he did to mo, as he coud arede,
Graspyng aftir with the staff in lengith and eke in brede;
And fond hym othir whyle redlich i-noughe
With the staffys end high upon the browe.
The hosteler ley oppon his bed, and herd of this affray,
And stert hym up lightlich, and thought he wold asay;
He toke a staff in his hond, and highed wondir blyve
Tyl he wer with the feleship that shuld nevir thryve.
"What be yee?" quod the hosteler, and knew them both wele.
"Huyst! pese!" quod the paramour; "Jak, thow must be fele.
Ther is a theff, I tell the, within this hall dorr."
"A theff!" quod Jak, "this is a nobill chere
That thou hym hast y-found; yf wee hym myght cach."
"Yis, yis, care the nought; with hym we shal mach
Wele i-nowe, or he be go, yf so we had lighte;

For we to be stronge i-nowe with o man for to fighte."
"The devill of hell," quod Jak, "breke this thevis bonis!
The key of the kitchen, as it wer for the nonys,
Is above with our dame, and she hath such usage,
And she be wake of her slepe she fallith in such a rage,
That al the weke aftir there may no man hir plese,
So she sterith aboute this house in a wood rese.
But now I am avysid bet how we shul have lyte;
I have too gistis within, that this same nyght
Sopid in the halle, and had a litill feir.
Go up," quod Jak, "and loke, and in the ashis pire;
And I wol kepe the dorr, he shall not stert out."
"Nay, for God! that woll I nat, lest I cach a clout,"
Seid the tothir to Jak; "for thou knowist bettir then I
All the estris of this house, go up thy self and spy."
"Nay, for soth," quod Jak, "that were grete unrighte,
To aventur oppon a man that with hym did not fighte.
Sithens thou hast hym bete, and with thy staff y-pilt,
Me thinkith it wer no reson that I shuld bere the gilt;
For by the blysyng of the cole he myght se myne hede,
And lightly leve me such a stroke ny hond to be dede.
Then wol we to by common assent sech hym al about,
Who that metith hym first pay him on the snout;
For methought I herd hym here last among the pannys.
Kepe thou the tothir side, but ware the watir cannys,
And if he be herin, ryght sone we shull hym fynde;
And we to be stronge i-nowghe o theffe for to bynde."
"Aha ha!" thought the pardoner, "beth the pannys aryn?"
And drowghe oppon that side, and thought oppon a gynne;
So at last he fond oon, and set it on his hede.
For, as the case was fall, therto he had grete nede.
But yit he graspit ferthirmore to have somwhat in honde;

And fond a grete ladill, right as he was gonde,
And thought for to sterte out betwene them both to ;
And waytid wele the paramour that had doon hym woo ;
And set him with the ladill on the gruscill on the nose,
That all the week after he had such a pose,
That both his eyin waterid erlich by the morowe.
But she that was the cause of it had therof no sorowe.
But now to the pardoner ; as he wold stert awey,
The hosteler met with hym, but nothyng to his pay ;
The pardoner ran so swith the pan fill hym fro,
And Jak hosteler aftir hym, as blyve as he myght go ;
And stapid oppon a bronde al unware,
That hym had bin beter to have goon more asware ;
For the egg of the pann met with his shynne,
And karff atoo a veyn, and the next syn.
But whils that it was grene he thought litil on,
But when the greneness was apast, the greff sat ner the bone.
Yit Jak leyd to his hond to grope wher it sete,
And when he was y-hurt, the pardoner he gan to threte ;
And swore by seint Amyas, that he shuld abigg
With stroks hard and sore, even oppon the rigg ;
Yf he hym myght fynd, he nothyng wold hym spare.
That herd the pardoner wele, and held hym bettir asquare,
And thought that he had strokis ryght i-nough,
Wytnes on his armes, his bak, and his browe.
"Jak," then quod the paramour, "wher is the theff ago ?"
"I note," quod tho Jak ; "right now he lept me fro,
That Cristis curs go with hym, for I have harm and spite."
"Be my trowith, and I also, and he goith nat al quyte ;
But and we myght hym fynd, we wold aray hym so

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593 *seint Amyas.* I know not the saint referred to in this name, unless it be St. Aimé or Amatus.

That he shuld have legge, ne foot, to morowe on to go.
But how shull we hym fynd ; the moon is adown,"
(As grace was for the pardoner) and eke when they did roun,
He herd them evir wele i-nowe, and went the more asyde,
And drew him evir bak-ward, and let the strokis glide.
"Jak," quod the paramour, "I hold it for the best,
Sith the moon is down, for to go to rest,
And make the gatis fast ; he may not then astert,
And eke of his own staff he berith a redy mark,
Wherby thou mayest him knowe among all the route,
And thou ber a redy ey and weyte wele aboute,
To morowe when they shull wend ; this is the best rede.
Jak, what seyst thou therto ? is this wele y-seyd ?"
"Thy wit is clere," quod Jak, "thy wit mut nedis stonde."
He made the gatis fast ; ther is no more to doon.
The pardoner stode asyde, his chekis ron and bled,
And was ryght evil at ese al nyght in his hede :
He must of force lige lyke a colyn swerd ;
Yit it mevid him wondir sore for making of his berd ;
He payd at full therfore, through a womans art,
For wyne, and eke for cawdill, and had therof no part ;
He therfor preyd seynt Juliane, as ye mowe onderstonde,
That the devill her shulde spede, on watir and on londe,
So to disseive a travellyng man of his herbegage ;
And coud not els save curs, his angir to aswage ;
And was distract of his wit, and in grete despayr ;
For aftir his hete he caught a cold through the nightis eyr ;
That he was ner asoundit, and coud none othir help.
But as he sought his loggyng, he happid oppon a whelp
That ley undir a steyir, a grete Walssh dog,

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625 *seynt Juliane.* St. Julian was the patron saint of hospitality, and of places of public entertainment.

That bare about his neck a grete huge clog;
Because that he was spetous, and wold sone bite:
The clog was hongit about his nek, for men shuld nat wite
Nothyng the doggis maister, yf he did eny harm;
So, for to excuse them both, it was a wyly charm.
The pardoner wold have loggit hym ther, and lay somwhat nigh;
The warrok was awakid and caught hym by the thigh,
And bote hym wondir spetously, defending wele his couch,
That the pardoner myght nat ne hym nether touch,
But held hym asquare by that othir side,
As holsom was at that tyme, for tereing of his hyde:
He coud noon othir help, but leyd adown his hede
In the doggis littir, and wisshid aftir brede,
Many a time and offt, the dog for to plese,
To have y-ley more nere for his own ese.
But wish what he wold, his fortune seyd ney;
So trewly for the pardoner it was a dismal dey.
The dog ley evir grownyng, redy for to snache;
Wherfor the pardoner durst nat with hym mache;
But ley, as still as eny stone, remembryng his foly,
That he wold trust a tapster of a common hostry;
For commonly for the most part they ben wyly echon.
But now to alle the company a morrow, whan they shuld gon,
Was noon of all the feleship half so soon y-dight
As was the gentil pardoner; for al tyme of the nyght
He was aredy in his aray, and had nothing to doon,
Saffe shake a lite his eris, and trus, and be goone.
Yet or he cam in company, he wissh awey the blood,
And bond the sorys to his hede with the typet of his hood;
And made lightsom chere; for men shuld nat spy
Nothyng of his turment, ne of his luxury.
And the hosteler of the house, for nothyng he coud pry,
He coud nat knowe the pardoner among the company.

A morowe when they shuld wend, for ought that they coud pour,
So wysely went the pardoner out of the doggis bour ;
And blynched from the hosteler, and turned efft about,
And evirmore beheld hym amyd-ward of the rout ;
And was evir syngyng to make al thyng good ;
But yit his notis wer somwhat low, for aking of his hede.
So at that tyme he had no more grame ;
But held hym to his hapynes to scape shame.
The knyght and al the feleship forward gon they wend,
Passyng forth merely to the townys end ;
And by that tyme they wer ther, the day began to rype ;
And the son merely upward gan he pike,
Pleying undir the egge of the firmament.
"Now," quod the hoost of Southwork, and to the feleship bent;
"Who sawe evir so feyre or so glad a day ?
And how sote this seson is entring into May :
The thrustelis, and the thrushis, in this glad mornyng,
* * * *
The ruddok, and the goldfynch, but the nyghtyngale
His amerous notis lo how he twynyth small.
Lo how the trees grenyth, that nakid wer, and no thing
Bare this month afore, but their sommer clothing !
Lo how nature makith for them everichone,
And, as many as ther be he forgettith noone !
Lo how the seson of the yere, and Averell shouris,
Doith the busshis burgyn out blossoms and flouris !
Lo the prymerosis how fresh they ben to sene,
And many othir flouris among the grasis grene !
Lo how they spryng, and sprede, and of divers hue,

683 There is evidently a line wanting before or after this line, but I have no possibility of restoring it.

Beholdith, and seith both rede, white and blue,
That lusty bin and comfortabill for mannys sight!
For I sey for my self, it makith my hert to light.
Now sith Almighty Sovereyn hath sent so feir a dey,
Let se now, as covenaunt is, in shorting of the wey,
Who shall be the first that shall unlace his male,
In comfort of us al, and gyn some mery tale?
For and we shuld now begyn to draw lot,
Peraventure it myght fal ther it ought not,
On som unlusty persone, that wer not wele awakid,
Or semybousy ovyr eve, and had y-song, and crakid,
Somwhat ovir much; how shold he than do?
For who shuld tell a tale he must have good wyll therto.
And eke som men fasting beth glewid, and y-bound
In their tongis; and some fastyng beth nothyng jocund;
And som in the morning their mouthis beth adoun,
Tyll that they be charmyd their wordis woll not soun.
So thys is my conclusioune, and my last knot,
It wer grete gentilnes to tell without lot.
"By the rood of Bromholm," quod the marchant tho,
"As fer as I have sailed, riden, and y-go,
Sawe I nevir man tofore this ilk day,
So wele coud rule a company, as our host in fay.
His wordis ben so comfortabill, and comyth so in seson,
That my wit is ovircome, to make eny reson
Contrary to his counsaill, at myn ymagynacioune,
Wherfor I woll tell a tale to your consolacioune;
In ensampill to yowe, that when that I have do,
Anothir be right redy then for to tell, ryght so
To fulfyll our hoostis wyll and his ordinaunce.
There shall no fawte be found in me, gode wyl shal be my chaunce,
With this I be excusid of my rudines,

Altho I cannot peynt my tale, but tell it as it is ;
Lepyng ovir no sentence, as ferforth as I may,
But telle yowe the yolke, and put the white away.

THE MERCHANTS SECOND TALE, OR THE HISTORY OF BERYN.

Whilom yeris passid in the old dawis,
When rightfullich by reson governyd wer the lawis,
And principally in the ceté of Rome that was so rich,
And worthiest in his dayes, and noon to hym i-lich,
Of worship, ne of wele, ne of governaunce ;
For alle londis christened therof had dotaunce ;
And all othir natiouns, of what feith they were.
Whils the emperour was hole, and in his paleys there
I-mainteyned in honour, and in popis se,
Rome was then obeied of all Cristanté.
But it farith therby, as it doith by othir thingis ;
For though nethir ceté, regioune, ne kyngis
Beth nat nowe so worthy as wer by old tyme ;—
As we fynd in romaunces, in gestis, and in ryme.
For all things doith wast, and eke mannys lyff
Is more shorter then it was ; and our wittis fyve
Mowe nat comprehende, now in our dietes,
As som tyme myght these old wise poetes ;—
But sith that terrene things ben nat perdurabill,
No mervaile is, though Rome be somwhat variabill
Fro honour and fro wele, sith his frendis passid ;
As many anothir town is payrid, and y-lassid
Within these few yeris, as we mowe se at eye,
Lo sirs, here fast by Wynchelse and Ry.
But yit the name is evir oon of Rome, as it was groundit
After Remus and Romulus that first that ceté foundit ;

That brethren weren both to, as old bokes writen ;
But of ther lef and governaunce I wol nat now enditen ;
But of othir mater, that fallith to my mynd.
Wherfor, gentill sirs, ye that beth behind,
Drawith somwhat nere thikker to a rout ;
That my wordis may soune to ech man about.
Aftir these two brethren Romulus and Remus,
Julius Cæsar was emperour, that rightful was of domus ;
This ceté he governed nobilich wele,
And conquered many a regioune, as cronicull doth us telle.
For shortly to conclude, al tho wer adversaryes
To Rome in his dayis, he made them tributaries.
So had he in subjectioune both frend and foon ;
Of which I tell yow trewely Englond was oon.
Yit aftir Julius Cæsar, and sith that Crist was bore,
Rome it was governed as wele as it was before,
And namelich in that tyme, and in the same yeris,
When it was governed by the doseperis ;
As semeth wele by reson, who so can entend,
That o mannys wyt ne wyll may not comprehend
The boncheff and the myscheff, as may many hedis :
Therfor ther operaciouns, ther domes, and ther dedes
Were so egallich y-doon ; for in al cristen londis,
Was noon that they sparid for to mend wrongis.
Then Constantyne the third, aftir these dosiperis,
Was emperour of Rome, and regnyd many yeris.
So shortly to pas ovir, aftir Constantyns dayis,
Phus Augustinus, as songen is in layes,
That Constantynys son, and of plener age,
Was emperour y-chose, as fill by heritage ;
In whose tyme sikerlich, the seven sages were

774 *doseperis*. The *douze pairs* are introduced rather singularly to represent the Roman senate.

787 *the seven sages*. These seven individuals were very celebrated in

In Rome dwellyng decently ; and yf yee lust to lere,
How they were y-clepid, or I ferther goon,
I woll tell you the names of them everichone ;
And declare you the cause why they ther namys bere
And first was y-cleped Sother Legifeer ;
This is thus much for to sey, as man bering the lawe ;
And so he did trewly ; for levir he had be sclawe,
Then do or sey eny thing that sownyd out of reson :
So cleen was his conscience y-set in trowith and reson.
Marcus Stoycus the second, so pepill hym highte ;
That is to mene in our constert, a keper of the right :
And so he did full trewe ; for the record and the plees,
He wrote them evir trewly ; and took noon othir fees,
But such as was ordeyned to take by the yere.
Now, Lord God ! in Cristendom I wold it were so clere.
The third Crassus Asulus among men clepid was ;
An house of rest, and ese, and counsail in every case ;
For to onderstond that was his name full right,
For evirmore the counsails he helpid wyth al his myght.
Antonius Judeus the forth was y-clepid ;
That was as much to mene, as wele ne myght have clepid,
As eny purposid of all the long yere,
That myght have made hym sory or chongit onys chere,
But evirmore rejoycing, what that evir betid ;
For his hert was evir mery, right as the somer bridd.
Summus Philopater was the fifftis name ;
That thoughe men wold flee hym, or do hym al the shame,
Angir, or disese, as evil as men couthe,
Yet wold he love them nevir the wers, in hert ne in mowith.
His will was cleen undir his foot, and nothing hym above ;

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the Middle Ages, and were the heroes of a story of which a version in English verse has been published by the Percy Society. They are rather oddly introduced here.

Therfor he was clepid father of perfite love.
The sixth and the seventh of these sevin sages,
Was Stypio, and Sithero ; as thes words astrolages
Was surname to them both, aftir their sciences.
For of astronomy sikerlich the cours, and all the fences
Bothe they knowhit wele i-noughe, and wer right sotil of art.
But now to othir purpose for her I woll depart,
As lightly as I can, and draw to my matere.
In that same tyme, that these sages were
Dwellyng thus in Room, a litil without the walles,
In the subarbis of the town, of chambris, and of hallis,
And all othir howseing, that to a lord belongit,
Was noon wythyn the ceté, ne noon so wele behongit
With docers of highe pryse, ne wallid so aboute,
As was a senatours hous, wythyn, and eke wythoute.
Favinus was his name, a worthe man, and rich ;
And for to sey shortlych, in Room was noon hym lyche.
His portis and his estris were full evenaunte
Of tresor, and of lordshyp ; also the most valiant
He was, and eke y-com of high lynage.
And at last he toke a wyff, like to his peerage ;
For noriture, and connyng, bewté, and parentyne,
Wer the countid more worth, than gold or sylvir fyne.
But now it is all othir in mannys thought ;
For muk ys now y-married, and vertu set at nought.
Fawnus and his worthy wyff wer togither aloon,
Fyveteene wyntir fulliche, and issu had they noon.
Wherfor their joyis wer nat half perfite ;
For uttirlich to have a child was al ther delite,
That myght enjoy ther heritage, and weld ther honour,
And eke, when they were febill, to their trew socoure.
Their fastyng, and their preyir, and all that evir they wrought,

As pilgramage, and almsded, ever they besought
That God would of his goodness som fruyte betwene them send.
Fro gynnyng of their spousaill, the myddil, and the end,
This was their most besynes; and all othir delices,
And eke this worldis rychis, they set at litil price.
So at last, as God wold, it fill oppon a dey,
As this lady fro chirch-ward went in the wey,
A child gan stere in her womb, as Goddis wyl was;
Wherof she gan to mervill, and made shortir pas,
Wyth colour pale, and eke wanne, and full in hevynes;
For she had nevir, tofore that day, such manere sekenes.
The wymmen, that with her were, gon to behold
The lady and her chere, but nothyng they told;
But feir and soft wyth ese hom-ward they her led;
For her soden sekenes full sore they were adred.
For she was inlich gentil, kynd, and amyabill,
And eke trewe of hert, and nothyng variabill.
She lovid God above all thing, and dred syn and shame;
And Agea sikerly was her rightfull name.
So aftir in breff tyme, when it was purseyvyd,
That she had done a womans dede, and had a child conseyvyd,
The joy that she made ther may no tung tell;
And al so much, or more yf I ne ly shell,
Favinus made in his behalf, for this glad tyding,
That I trowe, I leve the emperour, ne the kyng,
Made no bettir cher to wyff, ne no more myrth,
Then Fawnus to Agea. And when the tyme of birth
Nyghid ner and ner, aftir cours of kynd,
Wetith wele in certen, that al the wyt and mynd
Of Fawnus was continuell of feir delyveraunce,
Betwene Agea and his child; and made grete ordenaunce,

Ageyn the tyme it shuld be bore, as it was for to doon.
So as God wold, whan tyme cam, Agea had a son.
But joy that Fawnus made, was dobil tho tofore,
When that he knew in certen she had a son y-bore ;
And sent anoon for nursis four, and no less,
To reule this child ; after-ward, as yeris did pas,
The child was kept so tenderly, that it throff wel the bet,
For what the norishes axit, anoon it was y-sett.
In his chambir it norished was, to town it must nat go ;
Fawnus lovid it so cherely, it myght nat part hym fro.
It was so feir a creature, as myght be on lyve,
Of lymes, and of fetours, and growe wondir blyve.
This child, that I of tell, Berinus was his name,
Was ovir much cherished, which turned him into grame ;
As yee shull here aftir, when tyme comyth and spase :
For aftir swete the soure comyth full oft, in many a plase.
For as sone as he coud go and also speke,
All that he set his ey on, or aftir list to beke,
Anoon he shuld it have ; for no man hym wernyd.
But it had be well bettir, he had be wele y-lerned
Noriture and gentilnes ; and had y-had som hey.
For it fill so aftir, with what child he did pley,
Yf the pley ne likid hym, he wold breke his hede ;
Or wyth a knyff hym hurt ryght nygh hond to be dede.
For ther nas knyght, ne squyer, in his fathirs house,
That thought his owne persone moste corajouse,
That did or seyd eny thing Berinus to displese,
That he nold spetously anoon oppon him rese.
Wherof his fathir had joy, and his mothir also ;
Yit it semeth to many a man, it was nat wisely do.
When Beryn passid was seven yere, and grew in more age,
He wrought ful many an evil chek ; for such was his corage,
That ther he wist or might do eny evill dede,

He wold nevir fese, for ought that men him seid.
Wherfor many a pore man oft was agrevid.
But Fawnus and Agea ful light theron belevid ;
And thoughe men wold pleyne, full short it shuld availe ;
For Fawnus was so mighty, and cheff of all counsaill,
With Augustyn the emperour, that all men hym drad,
And lete pas ovir mischefe, and harmys that they had.
Berinus ferthermore lovid wel the dise,
And for to pley at hazard, and held therof grete pryse,
And all othir gamys that losery was in ;
And evirmore he lost, and nevir myght wyn.
Berynus at hazard many a nyght he wakid ;
And oft tyme it fill so, that he cam hom al nakid ;
And that was all his joy : for right wele he knew,
That Agea his mothir wold cloth hym newe.
Thus Berynus lyvid, as I have told tofore,
Tyll he was of the age of eighteen yere or more.
Fawnus made amendis, and put them in quiete ;
So was the fathir cause the sone was so wyld.
And so have many mo such, of his own child
Be cause of his undoyng, as we mowe se al day ;
For thing y-take is hard to put awey ;
As how that evir trottid, trewlich I yow telle,
It were hard to make hym aftir to ambill welle.
Ryght so by Beryn, when he had his lust and wyll, when he was lite,
It shuld be hevy after-ward to reve his old delite ;
Save the whele of fortune, that no man may withstonde ;
For every man on lyve theron he is gond,
O spoke she turnyd bak-ward, righte at high noone,
All ageyn Berinus, as ye shull here sone.
Agea his mothir fell in grete sekenes,
And sent aftir husbond wyth wordis hire to lis ;

And for she wold tell hym hir hole hertis wyll,
Er she out of the world partid, as it was right and skill.
When Fawnus was y-come, and saw so rodylese
Hys wyff, that was so dere, that for love he chese,
No mervell though his hert wer in grete mournyng,
For he purseyvyd fullich she drewe to hir endyng ;
Yit made othir chere then in his hert was,
To put awey discomfort, dissimilyng wyth his fase
The hevynes of his hert, wyth chere he did it close.
For such a manner craft ther is wyth them can glose,
Save that tournyth all to cautele ; but Fawnus did nat so,
For, wetith wele, in certeyn his hert was full of wo,
For his wyff Agea ; and yit for craft he couth
The teris fro his eyin ran doun by his mowith ;
When he saw the pangis of deth comyng so fast
Oppon his wyff Agea, almost his hert to-brast.
Agea lyfft up hir eyin, and beheld the chere
Of hir husbond Fawnus, that was so trew a fere ;
And seyd, "Sir, why do ye thus ? this is an elyng fare,
In comfort of us both, yf yee myght spare,
And put awey thys hevynes ; whyle that yee and I
Myght speke of othir thyngis ; for deth me nyghith nygh.
For to body, ne to soule, this vailyth nat a karse."
"Now tellyth on," quod Fawnus, "and I wol lete it pas,
For the tyme of talkyng, as wele as I may ;
But out of my remembraunce, onto my endyng day,
Your deth woll nevir, I woot it wele, but evir be in my mynd."
"Then, good sir," quod Agea, "beth to my soule kynd,
When my body is out of sight, for therto have I nede ;
For truer make, then yee be, in word, ne in dede,
Had nevir woman, ne more kyndnes
Hath shewed unto his make, I know, right wele i-wis.

Now wold ye so heraftir in hert be as trewe,
To lyve wythout make ; and on your sone rewe,
That litil hath y-lernid sithens he was bore.
Let hym have no stepmothir ; for children have tofore
Comelich they lovith nat ; wherfor wyth hert I prey,
Have chere onto your sone aftir my endyng day ;
For, so God me help, and I lafft yow behynd,
Shuld nevir man on lyve bryng it in my mynd
To be no more y-weddit, but lyve soule aloon.
Now yee know all my wyll, good sir, think theron."
" Certis," quod Fawnus, " whils I have wyttis fyve,
I think nevir aftir yow to have anothir wyff."
The preest was com therwythall, for to do hir rightis ;
Fawnus toke his leve, and all the othir knyghtis,
Hir kyndrid, and frendis, kissed hir echone.
It is no nede to axe wher ther was dole or noon.
Agea cast hir ey up, and lokid all aboute,
And wold have kissed Beryn ; but then was he wythoute
Pleying to the hazard, as he was wont to doon.
For as sone as he had ete, he wold ren out anoon.
And when she saw he was not ther, that she thought most on,
Hire sekenes and hire mournyng berst her hert anoon.
A damsell tofore that was ron into the toune
For to seche Beryn, that pleyed for his gowne,
And had almost lost it, right as the damsell cam ;
And swore, and starid, as he were wood, as longit to the game.
The damsell said to Beryn, " Sir, ye must com home :
For, but ye high blyve, that yee wer y-come,
Your mothir woll be dede ; she is yit on lyve ;
Yf ye wol speke wyth her, ye must hygh blyve."
" Who bad so, lewd Kitt ?" " Your fathir, sir," quod she.
" Go home, lewd visenage, that evil mut thow the!"

Quod Beryne to the damsell, and gan her fray and feer,
And bad the devill of hell hir should to-tere.
" Hast thow ought els to do but let me of my game ?
Now by God in hevin, by Peter, and by Jame !"
Quoth Beryn in grete angir, and swore be book and bell,
Rehersyng many namys, mo than me lyst to tell,
" Ner thow my fathers messenger, wer thou shuldist nevir ete brede ;
I had levir my mothir, and also thou, wer dede,
Then I shuld lese the game that I am nowgh in !"
And smote the damsell undir the ere, the weet gon upward spyn.
The death of Agea he set at litill pryse.
So in that wrath frolick, Beryn threw the dyse,
And lost wyth that same cast al was leyde adown :
And stert up in a wood rage, and ballid on his crown,
And so he did the remnaunt, as many as wold abyde.
But, for drede of Fawnus, his felawis gan to hyde ;
And nevir had wyll ne list wyth Beryn for to fyght,
But evir redy to pley, and wyn what they myght.
The deth of Agea sprang about the towne ;
And every man, that herd the bell for her sowne,
Bemonyd her full sore ; saff Beryn toke none hede,
But sought anothir feleship, and quyklich to them yede,
To such manner company as shuld nevir thryve,
For such he lovid bettir then his mothirs lyve.
And evirmore it shuld be nyght or he wold home drawe ;
For of his fathir, in certeyn, he had no manner awe.
For evir in his yowith he had al his wyll,
And was y-passid chastising, but men wold hym kyll.
Fawnus for Agea, as it was well fitting,
Made grete ordenaunce for hir burying,
Of prelatis, and of preestis, and of al othir thyng ;

As thoughe she had be a wyff of a worthy kyng.
But othir wyls amongis for pleyntis that were grete,
It myght nat have be mendit; such was his gentilnes;
For at hir enteryng was many a worthy messe.
For four weeks full, or he did here intere,
She ley in lede wythyn his house; but Beryn cam not there,
Namelich into the place where his mothir ley,
Ne onys wold he a Pater-noster for hir soule sey.
His thought was all in unthryft, lechery, and dyse,
And drawyng all to foly; for yowith is rechles,
But there it is refreyned, and hath som manere eye.
And therfore me thinkith, that I may wele sey,
A man y-passid yowith, and is wythout lore,
May be wele y-likened to a tre wythout more,
That may nat bowe, ne bere fruyte, but root, and ever wast;
Ryght so by yowith farith that no man list to chast.
This mowe we know verely by experience,
That yerd makith vertu and benevolence
In childhode for to growe, as provith ymagynacioune;
A plant, whils it is grene, or it have dominacioune,
A man may wyth his fyngers ply it, wher hym lyst,
And make therof a shakill, a with, or a twist;
But let the plant stond, and yeris ovirgrowe,
Men shull not wyth both his hondis unnethis make it growe;
No more myght Fawnus make his sone Beryn,
When he grew in age, to his lore enclyne.
For every day when Beryn rose, unwassh he wold dyne,
And draw hym to his feleship as even as a lyne;
And then com home, and ete, and soop, and sclepe at nyght;
This was al his besynes, but yf that he did fight.
Wherfor his fathirs heart Fawnus gan for to blede,
That of his mothir, that ley at home, he toke no more hede;
And so did all the pepill that dwellid in the town,

Of Beryn's wildnes gon speke and eke roun.
Fawnus oppon a dey, when Beryn cam at eve,
Was set oppon a purpose to make his sone leve
All his shrewd taichis, wyth goodnes if he myght,
And taught hym feir and soft; but Beryn toke it light,
And countid at litill pryse al his fadirs tale.
Fawnus saw it wold nat; with colour wan and pale
He partid from his sone, and wyth a sorowfull hert;
I ne can write halfyn-dele how sore he did smert
The disobeying of his sone, and his wyfis deth;
That, as the book tellith, he wisshed that his breth
Had y-been above the serkill celestyne,
So fervent was his sorowe, his angir, and his pyne.
So, shortly to conclude, Agea was interid;
And Fawnus livid wyfles thre yere were y-werid;
Wherof ther was grete speche for his high honour.
Tyll at last word cam onto the emperour,
That Fawnus was without wyfe, and seld was jocounde,
But mournyng for Agea, that he was to y-bound,
And lyvid as an hermyte, soule and destitute,
Wythout consolacioune, pensyff oft and mute.
Wherfor Augustinus, of Rome the emperour,
Was inwardlich sory, and in grete dolour.
Wyth that the seven sagis and senatouris all
Were assemblid, to discryve what shuld therof fall;
The wych seyd shortly, for a molestacioune
Ther was noon othir remedy, but a consolacioune.
For whoso wer in eny thing displesid or agrevid,
Must by a like thing egall be remevid.
And when the emperour knew all their determinacioune,
Quicklich in his mynd he had imaginacioune,
That Fawnus for Agea was in high distres,
And must y-curid be wyth passyng gentilnes

Of som lusty lady, that of pulchritude
Were excellent al othir ; so shortly to conclude,
The emperour had a love, tofore he had a wyf,
That he lovid as hertlich, as his own lyf,
As was as feir a creature as sone myght beshyne,
So excellent of bewté, that she myght be shryne
To all othir wymmen that wer tho lyvand.
But for the emperour had a wyf, ye shul wele onderstond,
He cam nat in hir company, to have his delite.
For Cristendome and conscience was tho more perfite,
Then it is now a dayis, yf I durst tell ;
But I woll leve at this tyme. Than Fawnus al so swell
Was aftir sent in hast, of seknes to be curyd.
So what for drede, and ellis, they were both ensuryd
In presence of the emperour, so Fawnus myght not flee ;
It was the emperours wyll, it myght noon othir be.
So wythin a tyme Agea was forgete ;
For Fawnus thought litill on that he hir behight.
For, as the seven sagis had afore declarid,
It cam all to purpos ; for Fawnus litil carid
For eny thyng at all, save his wyff to plese,
That Rame was y-clepid ; for rest nethir ese
Fawnus nevir had, but of her presence.
So was his hert on her y-sset, that he coud no defence,
Save evirmore be wyth hir, and stare on hir visage ;
That the most part of Room held it for dotage,
And had much marvell of his variaunce.
But what is that Fortune cannat put in chance ?
For ther nas man on lyve on woman more bedotid,
Than Fawnus was in Rame, ne half so much y-sotid.
Wyth that Rame had knowlech that Fawnus was y-smyt
Wyth the dart of love, yee mowe ryght wele it wyt,
That all that evir she coud cast or y-thynck,

Was all ageyn Berynus, for many a sotill wrench
She thought, and wrought day by day, as meny wemen doon,
Tyll they have of their desire the full conclusioune.
For the more that Fawnus of Rame did made,
The more dangerous was Rame, and of chere sade;
And kept wele her purpose undir covirture:
She was the las to blame, it grew of nature.
But though that Rame wrought so, God forbede that all
Wer of that condicioune; yet touch no man the gall,
It is my plein counsell, but doith as othir doith;
Take your part as it comith, of roughe, and eke of smoothe.
Yit noritur, wit, and gentilnes, reson, and perfite mynde,
Doth all these worthy women to worch ageyns kynde;
That thoughe they be agrevid they suffir, and endure,
And passith ovir, for the best, and folowith nothing nature.
But now to Rames purpose, and what was hir desire
Shortly to conclude, to make debate and ire
Betwene the fathir and the sone, as it was likely tho;
What for his condicioune, and what for love also,
That Fawnus owt to his wyff, the rathir he must hir leve,
And grant for to mend, yf ought hir did greve.
Berinus evir wrought, right as he did before,
And Rame made hym chere of love, ther myght no womman more,
And gaff hym gold and clothing, evir as he did lese,
Of the best that he coud ought wher in town chese;
And speke full feir wyth hym, to make al thyng dede:
Yit wold she have yete his hert, wythout salt or brede;
She hid so hir felony, and spak so in covert,
That Beryn myght nat spy it but lite of Ramys hert.
So, shortly to pas ovir, it fill oppon a nyghte,
When Fawnus and his fresh wyf were to bed y-dight,
He toke hir in his armys, and made hir hertly chere,

Ther myght no man betir make to his fere;
And seyd, "Myn erthly joy, myne hertis full plesaunce,
My wele, my woo, my paradise, my lyvis sustenaunce,
Why ne be ye mery? why be ye so dull?
Sith ye know I am your own, right as your hert woll.
Now tell on love, myn own hert, yf ye eylith ought;
For, and it be in my power, anoon it shall be wrought."
Rame wyth that gan sighe, and wyth a wepeing chere,
Undid the bagg of trechery, and seide in this manere,
"No mervell though myn hert be sore and full of dele,
For when I to yow weddit was, wrong went my whele;
But who may be ageyns hap and aventure?
Therfor, as wele as I may, myne I mut endure."
Wyth many sharp wordis she set his hert on feir,
To purchase with hir practik that she did desire;
But hoolich all hir wordis I cannot wele reherse,
Ne write, ne endite, how she did perce
Through Fawnys hert, and his scull also.
For more petouse compleynt, of sorowe, and of wo,
Made nevir woman ne more petously,
Then Rame made to Fawnys; she smote full bitterly
Into the veyn, and through his hert blood;
She bloderit so, and wept, and was so high on mode,
That unneth she myght speke but othir while among
Wordis of discomfort, and hir hondis wrong;
For alas! and woo the tyme, that she weddit was,
Was evir more the frefreit, when she myght have spase:—
"I am y-weddit, ye, God woot best in what maner and how!
For yf it wer so fall, I had a child by you,
Lord! how shuld he lyve? how shuld he com awey?
Sith Beryn is your first sone, and heir aftir your day;
But yf that he had grace to scoole for to goo,
To have som maner connyng, that he myght trust to.

For as it now stondith it were the best rede ;
For, so God me help, I had levir he were dede,
Than wer of such condicioune, or of such lore,
As Beryn your sone is, it wer bett he wer unbore.
For he doith nat ellis, save at hazard pley,
And comyth home al nakid ech othir dey.
For within this month, that I have wyth yow be,
Fiftene sithis, for verry grete pité,
I have y-clothid hym al new, when he was to-tore ;
For evirmore he seyde the old were y-lore.
Now, and he wer my sone, I had levir he were y-sod ;
For, and he pley so long, half our lyvelode
Wold scarsly suffise hymself oon,
And nere yee wold be grevid ; I swere by seynt Johan,
He shuld aftir this dey be clothid no more for me,
But he wold kepe them bettir, and draw fro nyceté."
"Now, gentill wyff, gramercy of your wise tale !
I thynk wel the more, that I sey no fale ;
For towchyng my grevaunce, that Beryn goith al nakid,
Treulich that grevaunce is somwhat asclakid.
Let hym aloon, I prey yow, and I woll con yow thank ;
For in such losery he hath lost many a frank.
The devil hym spede that rech, yf he be to-tore !
And he use it hereaftir, as he hath doon tofore."
Beryn arose a morowe, and cried wondir fast,
And axid aftir clothis, but it was all in wast.
Ther was no man tendant for hym in all the house ;
The wele was y-chaungit into anothir cours.
Fawnus herd his sone wele, how he began to cry,
And rose up anoon, and to hym did high,
And had forgete nothyng that Rame had y-seyde ;
For he boillid so his hert, he was nat well apayde !
He went into the chambir ther his sone ley,

And set hym down in a chair, and thus he gan to sey:
"My gentil sone, Beryn, now feir I woll ye teche;
Rew oppon thy self, and be thyne own leche.
Manhode is y-com now, myne own dere sone,
It is tyme thow be aweynyd of thyn old wone;
And thow art twenty wynters, and naught hast of doctryne;
Yit woldist thow draw to perfite, the worship wold be thyne
To noritur, and goodship, and al honest thing,
Ther myght com to myn hert no more glad tyding.
Leve now al thy foly, and thy rebawdry,
As tablis, and mervellis, and the hazardry;
And draw the to the company of honest men and good,
Els leve thow me; as wele as Criste died on the rode,
And for al menkynd his ghost pas lete,
Thow shalt for me heraftir stond on thyn own fete;
For I woll no longir suffir this aray,
To clothe the al new eche othir dey.
Yf thow wolt draw the to wit, and rebawdry withdraw,
Of such good, as God hath sent, yn part shalt thow have.
And yf thow wolt nat, my sone, do as I the tell;
Of me shalt thow naught have, trust me right well.
Wenyst thow wyth thy dise-pleying hold myn honoure,
Aftir my deth dey?" Then Beryn gan to loure,
And seide, "Is this a sermon, or a prechement?
Ye were nat wont herto, how is this y-went?
Sendith for some clothing, that I wer ago;
My fellawis lokith aftir me, I woot well they do so;
I woll nat leve my feleship, ne my rekelagis,
Ne my dise-pleying, for all your heretages!
Doith your best wyth them by your lyf day;
But when they fall to me, I wol do as I may.
Benedicite, fathir, who hath enformyd you,
And set you into ire, to make me chere rowe,

But I know wele i-nough whens this counsaill cam ;
Trewlich of your own wyfe, that evil dame !
.....com oppon hir body, that fals putaigne !
For trewlich, fathir, yee dote on hir, and so al men seyne.
Alas ! that evir a man shuld, that is of high counsaile,
Set all his wysdom in his wyvis taile !
Yee lovith hir so much, she hath benome your wyt ;
And I may curs the tyme that evir ye wer y-knyt ;
For now, I am in certen, I have a stepmothir ;
They ben shrewis, som ther been, but few othir,
Vel fikil flaptail, such oon as she ys,
For all my pleying at dise, yit do yee more amys ;
Yee have y-lost your name, your worship, and your feith ;
So dote ye on hir, and levith all she sayith."
Fawnus, with the same word, gaff the chayir a but,
And lepe out of the chambir, as who seyd cut :
And swore, in verrey woodnes, be God omnipotent,
That Beryn of his wordis shuld sore repent.
Beryn set nought therof, with a proude hert
Answerd his fathir, and axid a new shert.
He gropid al about to have found oon,
As he was wont tofore, but ther was noon.
Then toke he such willokis as he fond ther,
And beheld hymself what man he wer.
And when he was arayde, then gan he first be wrothe ;
For his womb lokid out, and his rigg both.
He stert aftir his fathir, and he began to cry,
" For seth myn aray ; for the villany
Ys as wele yours, as it is myne."
Fawnus let him clatir, and cry wel and fyne,
And passid forth still, and spak nat a word.
Then Beryn gan to think it was nat al bord
That his fathir seyde, when he wyth hym was ;

And gan to think all about; and therwyth seid, "Allas!
Now know I wele for soth, that my mothir is dede;"
For tho gan he to glow first a sory mannys hede.
Now kepe thy cut, Beryn; for thou shalt have a fit,
Somwhat of the world, to lern betir wit:
For, and thow wist sikerly what ys for to com,
Thou woldist wissh aftir thy deth full oft and y-lome;
For ther nys betyng half so sore wyth staff, nethir swerd,
As man to be bete with his own yerd.
The pyry is y-blowe, hop, Beryn, hop,
That ripe wol heraftir, and on thyn hede drop.
Thou tokist noon hede, whils it shoon hoot;
Therfor wynter the nyghith, asay by thy cote.
Beryn for shame to town durst he nat go;
He toke his wey to church-ward, his frend was made his foo.
For angir, sorowe, and shame, and hevynes that he had,
Unneth he might speke, but stode half as mad.
'O alas!" quod Beryn, "what wyt had I?
That coud nat, tofore this dey, know sikerly
That my mothir dede was; but now I know to sore;
And drede more, that eche day hereaftir more and more
I shall know, and fele, that my mothir is dede.
Alas! I smote the messangere, and toke of hir noon hede.
Alas! I am right pore, alas! that I am nakid!
Alas! I sclept to fast, tyl sorowe now hath me wakid!
Alas! I hungir sore; alas! for dole and peyn!
For eche man me seith hath me in disdeyn!"
This was all his mirth, to the church-ward,
That of his mothir, Agea, he toke so litill reward.
When Beryn was within the chirch, than gan he wers fray;
As sone as he saw the tomb where his mothir lay,
His colour gan to chaunge into a dedely hew:
"Alas! gentil mothir, so kynd you wer, and trew,

It is no mervell, for thy deth though I sore smert."
But therewythal the sorowe so fervent smote his hert,
That sodeynly he fil down stan dede in swowe;
That he had part of sorowe, me thinkith that myght I avowe.
Beryn lay so long, or he myght awake,
For al his fyve wittis had clene hym forsake.
Wel myght he by hymself, when reson y-com were,
Undirstond that fortune had a sharp spere,
And eke grete power, among high and lowe,
Som to avaunce, and som to ovirthrowe.
So at last, when Beryn a litill wakid were,
He trampelid fast with his fete, and al to-tare his ere,
And his visage both, right as a woodman,
With many a bitir tere, that from his eyen ran;
And sighid many a sore sigh, and had much hevynes;
And evirmore he cursid his grete unkyndnes
To foregit his mothir, whils she was alyve;
And lenyd to hir tombe opon his tore sclyve;
And wishid a thowsand sithis, he had y-be hir by:
And beheld hir tombe with a petouse eye.
"Now, glorious God," quod Beryn, "that al thing madist of nought,
Heven and erth, man and beste; sith I am myswrought,
Of yowe I axe mercy, socour, and help, and grace,
For my mysdede, and foly, unthryffe, and trespase.
Set my sorowe and peyn somwhat in mesure
Fro dispeir and myscheff, as I may endure.
Lord of all lordis, though fortune be my foo,
Yit is thy myght above, to turn hym to and fro.
First my mothirs lyfe fortune hath me berevid,
And sith my fathirs love, and nakid also me levid;
What may he do more? yis, take awey my lyfe.
But for that wer myn ese, and end of al stryfe,

Therfor he doith me lyve, for my wers, I sey,
That I shuld evirmore lyve, and nevir for to dey."
Now leve I Beryn with his mothir, tyl I com aye,
And wol return me to Rame, that of hir sotilté
Bethoughte hir al aboute, when Beryn was agoon,
That it shuld be wittid hir; wherfor she anoon
In this wise seyd to Fawnus, "Sir, what have ye do?
Althoughe I speke a mery word, to suffir your sone go
Nakid into the town? it was nat my counsail.
What wol be seyd therof? sikir without faile,
For I am his stepmodir, that I am cause of alle
The violence, the wrath, the angir, and the gall,
That is betwene yow both, it wol be wit me;
Wherfor I prey you hertly, doith hym com hom aye."
"Nay, by trowith," quod Fawnus, "for me comyth he nat yit;
Sithe he of my wordis so litil prise set;
As litil shall I charge his estate also.
Sorowe have that rechith, though he nakid go!
For every man knowith that he is nat wise;
Wherfor may be supposid, his pleying at dise
Is cause of his aray, and nothyng yee, my wyff."
"Yes i-wis," quod Rame, "the tale woll be ryff
Of me, and of noon othir, I know right wel afyne:
Wherfor I prey you, gentil sir, and for love myn,
That he wer y-fet hom, and that in grete hast;
And let asay offt ageyn with feirnes hym to chaste;
And send Beryn clothis, and a new shert;"
And made al wele in eche side, and kept close her hert.
"Now sith it is your wyll," quod Fawnus tho anoon,
"That Beryn shall home com; for your sake aloon
I woll be the message to put your hert in ese;
And els, so God me help, wer it nat yow to plese,
The gras shuld grow on pament or I hym home bryng."

Yet nethirles forth he went, wyth too or thre, riding
From o strete to anithir, enqueryng to and fro
Aftir Beryn, in every plase wher he was wont to go;
Seching eviry halk, howris too or thre,
With hazardours, and othir such, ther as he was wont to be;
And fond hym nat ther; but to chirch went echone,
And at dorr they stode a while, and herd Beryn made his mone.
They herd all his compleynt, that petouse was to here.
Fawnus into the chirch pryvelych gan pire;
But al so sone as he beheld where Agea lay,
His teris ran down be his chekis, and thus he gan to sey;
"A! Agea, myn old love, and my new also!
Alas! that evir our hertis shuld depart a-too!
For in your graciouse dayis, of hertis trobilnes
I had nevir knowlech, but of all gladnes."
Remembryng in his hert, and evir gan renewe
The goodnes betwene them both, and hir hert trewe;
And drew hym ner to Beryn, with an hevy mode.
But as sone as Beryn knew and undirstode
That it was his fathir, he wold no longir abide;
But anoon he voidit by the tothir side.
And Fawnus hym encountrid, and seyd, "We have the sought
Through the town, my gentil sone, and therfor void the nought;
Though I seyd a word or two, as me thought for the best,
For thyne erudicioune, to draw the onto lyfe honest,
Thou shuldist nat so fervently have take it to thyn hert.
But sith I know my wordis doith the so sore smert,
Shall no more hereaftir; and eche dey our diete
Shall be mery and solase, and this shall be forgete.
For wele I woot, for thy mothir that thou art to-tore;
Also thou hast grete sorowe, but onys nedith and no more;

And therfor, sone, on my blessing, to put sorowe awey,
Drawe the nowe heraftir to honest myrth and pley.
Lo, ther is clothing for yowe, and your hors y-dight
Wyth harneys all freshe new; and if yee list be knyght,
I shall yit or eve that bergeyn undirtake,
That the emperour, for my love, a knyght shall you make;
And what that evir ye nede, anoon it shall be bought.
For whils that I have eny thing, ye shall lak naught."
"Graunt mercy," quod Beryn, with an hevy chere,
"Of your worshipfull profir that ye have proferid me here;
But ordir of knyghthode to take is nat my liking;
And sith your will is for to do somwhat my plesing,
Ye have a wyfe ye love wele, and so tenderlich,
That, and she have childrin, I know right sikerlich
All that she con devyse, both be nyght and dey,
Shall be to make her childryn heirs of that she may,
And eke sowe sedis of infelicité,
Wherof wold growe devysioune betwene yowe and me.
For yf ye spend on me yeur good, and thus riallich,
Levith wele, in certen, your wyfe woll sikerlich
Eche dey for angir her tuskis whet,
And to-smyte with her tunge, your hert in wrath to set
Toward me from dey to dey, but ye wold aply
Somwhat to hir purpose, and aftir hir yow guy;
She wold wex so ovirtwart, and of so lither tach,
And evir lour undir her hood, aredy for to snache;
She wold be shortyng of your lyfe, and that desire I naught.
Wherfor to plese all about, my purpose and my thought
Is for to be a marchaunte, and leve myne heritage,
And relese it for evir, for shyppis fyve of stage
Full of marchaundise, the best of all this londe.
And yf ye wol so, fathir, quyk let make the bonde."
Fawnus was right well apayd, that ilk word outstert,

But yit he seyd to Beryn, "I mervell in myn hert,
Wher haddist thou this counsaile to leve thyne honour,
And lyve in grete aventure, and in grete labour."
And rid so forth talkyng, a soft esy pase,
Hom-ward to his plase, ther that Rame was.
And as sone as Fawnus was y-light adown,
And highid fast to his wyfe, and with hir gan to rown,
And told hir all the purpose, and made Fawnus chere;
She did hym nat half so much the tyme she was his fere.
She hullid hym, and mollid hym, and toke hym about the nekk,
And went low for the kite, and made many a bekk;
And seyd, "Sir, by your spech now right well I here,
That, yf ye list, ye mowe do thing that I most desire;
And that is this your heritage, there you best likid,
That ye myght gyve," and evir among the brussh awey she pikid
From hir clothis here and there, and sighid therwithall.
Fawnus, of his gentilnes, by hir myddil smale
Hertlich hir bracyd, and seyd, "I woll nat leve,
I suyr yow my trowith, that onys or it be eve
That I shall do my devoir without feintise,
For to plese your hert fullich in all wyse."
"Graunt mercy, myn own soverene," quod Rame tho mekely;
And made protestatioune, that she shuld sikerly
All the dayis of hir lyfe be to hym as hende
As evir woman was to man, as ferforth as hir mynd
And wit hir wold serve, and made grete othe.
Fawnus bood no longir, but forth therwith he goith.
A! precious God in heven, kyng of majeste!
So plentivouse this world is of iniquité,
Why is so y-suffrid, that trowith is brought adown
Wyth trechery and falshede, in feld and eke in town?

But now to Fawnus, and his entent, when he his sone met,
He toke hym soft by the hond, his tung he gan to whet
Sotilly to engyne hym ; first he gan to preche,
" Leve thy foly, my dere sone, and do as I the teche ;
Sith thou hast wit, and reson, and art of mannys age,
What nedith the be marchaunt, and shall have heritage ?
For, and thy good wer y-lost, the sorowe wold be myne,
To tell the soth right, nigh peregall to thyne.
And yf that I were dede, whils thow wer oute,
Lond, and rent, and all my good, have thou no doute,
It wold be plukkid from the, thy part wold be lest.
And also forthermore, I make oon beheest,
That I trowe my moblis wol nat suffise
To charge fyve shippis ful of marchandise,
But yf I leyd in mortgage my lond, and eke my rent,
And that I leve be nat thy wyll, ne thyn entent.
Yit nethirles, yf thy hert be so inly set
For to be a marchaunt, for nothing woll I let,
That I nyl do thy plesance, as ferforth as I mey,
To go ryght nygh myn own estate, but levir I had nay."
Their wordis, ne their dedis, ne matters them betwene,
I wol nat tary now theron my perchemen to spene.
But fynallich to the end of their accordement,
Fawnus had so goon about, y-turned, and y-went,
That he had brought his sone tofore the emperour,
To relese his heritage, and al his honour,
That he shuld have aftir his dey, for shippis fyve, and full
Y-led of marchaundise, of lynnyn, and of wool,
And of othir thingis that wer y-usid tho.
Engrosid was the covenaunt betwene them to,
Yn presence of the emperour, in opyn and no rown,
Tofore the gretist cenators and eldest of the town.
So when the relese selid was with a syde bonde,

They were y-leyd both in a meen honde,
Into the tyme that Beryn fullich sesid were
In the fyve shippis, that I yow told ere.
But who was glad but Fawnus? and to his wyff went,
And seyd, "Now, my hertis swete, all thyn hole entent
Ys uttirlich perfourmyd; us lakkith now no more,
But marchaundise and shippis, as I told tofore."
"That shall not faill," quod Rame, and began to daunce.
And aftirward they speken of the perveaunce.
Alas! this fals world so ful of trechery!
In whom shuld the sone have trust and feith sikirly,
If his fathir faylid him? whether myght he go
For to fynd a sikir frend, that he myght trust to?
So when these fyve shippis wer rayid and dight;
Fawnus and his sone to the emperour ful right
They went, and many a grete man for the same case,
To see both in possessioune, as their covenaunte was.
Beryn first was sesid in the shippis fyve;
And Fawnus had the relese, and bare it to his wyff;
And eche held them payde, and Rame best of all,
For she had conquerd thing that causid her most gall.
Now leve I Fawnys and his wyff; and of the governaunce
Of Beryn I wol speke, and also of his chaunce.
When lodismen, and maryneris, in al thing redy was,
This Beryn into Alisaunder, yf God wold send hym grace,
That wynde hym wold serve, he wold; so on a day,
The wynd was good, and they seylid on their wey
Too dayis fullich, and a nyght therwythal,
And had wethir at wyll; tyll at last gan fall
Such a myst among them, that no man myght se othir,
That wele was hym that had ther the blessing of his mothir.

1554 *into Alisaunder.* In the Middle Ages, Alexandria, in Egypt, was the grand mart of the commerce of the East.

For thre dayis incessantly the derknes among them was,
That no shipp myght se othir; wherfor, ful oft, "alas!"
They seyd, and to the high God they made their preyere,
That he wold of his grace them govern and stere,
So that their lyvis myght y-savid be;
For they were cleen in dispeyr, because they myght nat se
The loder, wherby these shipmen ther cours toke echone.
So at last, the ferth dey, making thus hir mone,
The dey gan clere; and then such wynd arose,
That blew their shippis elsewhere then was their first purpose.
The tempest was so huge, and so strong also,
That wele was hym that coude bynde or ondo
Any rope within the shipp that longit to the craft;
Every man shewid his connyng, tofore the shipp, and bafft.
The wynd awook, the see to-brast, it blew so gretly sore,
That Beryn and all his company, of synnys las and more,
Eche man round about shroff hymself to othir,
And put in Goddis gowernaunce lyf, shipp, and strothir.
For ther nas shippis meyné, for owght they coud hale,
That myght abate of the shipp the thiknes of a scale.
The wethir was so fervent of wynd, and eke of thundir,
That every shipp from othir was blowe of sight asondir;
And durid so al day and nyght; tyll on the morowe,
I trow it was no questioune wher they had joy or sorowe.
So aftirward, as God wold, the wynd was somwhat soft.
Beryne clepid a maryner, and bad hym sty on loft,
"And weyte aftir our four shippis aftir us doith dryve;
For it is but grace of God yf they be alyve."
A maryner anoon wyth that, right as Beryn bad,
Styed into the topcastell, and brought hym tydings glad.
"Sir," he seith, "be mery; your shippis comith echone
Saff and sound sailing, as ye shul se anoon;

1567 *The loder.* The northern star.

And eke, sir, ferthermore, lond also I sigh ;
Let draw our cors est-ward, thys tyde woll bryng us ny."
"Blessed be God," quod Beryn, "then wer our shippis com,

* * * *

We have no nede to dout werr ne molestatioune ;
For ther nys wythin our shippis no thing of spoliatioune,
But al trew marchaundise ; wherefor, lodisman,
Stere onys into the costis, as well as thou can ;
When our shippis be y-com, that we mowe pas in fere,
Lace on a bonnet or tweyn, that we mowe saile nere."
And when they wer the costis nygh, was noon of them alle
That wist what lond it was. Then Beryn gan to calle
Out of every ship anoon a maryner or tweyne,
For to take counsell ; and thus he gan to seyne ;
"The frountis of this ilk town been wondir feir wythall ;
Methinkith it is the best rede, what that evir befall,
That I myself aloon walk into the towne,
And here, and se, both here and there, upward and downe,
And enquere fullich of their governaunce.
What sey ye, sirs ? woll ye sent to the ordenaunce ?".
All they accordit well therto, and held it for the best ;
"For thus yf it be profitabill, we mowe abide and rest,
And yf it be othirwise, the rathir shall we go ;
For aftir that the spede, we woll work and do."
But nowe mowe ye her right a wondir thing ;
In all the world wyde, so fals of their lyvyng
Was no pepill ondir sone, ne none so disseyvabill,
As was the pepill of this town, ne more unstabill ;

[1616] The tale which follows is identically the same as one found in the Greek and Hebrew versions of the Seven Sages (Syntipas and the Proverbs of Sendabar). See my "Introduction to the Seven Sages", p. xxxi. From the manner in which the seven sages are introduced at the beginning of the tale of Beryn, it is evident there must have been some version of that romance in Europe differing from the usual one, which does not contain this story.

And had a cursed usage of sotill ymaginacioune,
That yf so wer the shippis of any straunge nacioune
Were com into the port, anoon they wold them hide
Within their own howsis, and no man go, ne ryde,
In not strete of alle the town; ascaunce that they wer lewde,
And coud no skill of marchandise, a skill it was a shrewde;
As ye shull here aftir, of their wrong and falshede;
But yit it fill, and worthy was, oppon their own hede.
Beryn arayd hym freshly, as to a marchand longith,
And set hym on a palfrey wel besey and hongit,
And a page rennyng by his hors fete:
He rode endlong the town, but no man coud he meet.
The dorrys wer y-closid in both too sidis;
Wherof he had mervell, yet ferthermore he ridis,
And waytid on his right hond a mancipilis plase,
All fressh and new, and thither gan he pase.
The gatis wer wyde up, and thithir gan he go;
For throughout the long town he fond so no mo.
Therin dwellid a burgeyse, the most scliper man
Of all the town throughout, and what so he wan
With trechery and gile, as doith som freris,
Right so must he part with his comperis.

Beryn light down on his hors, and in-ward gan he dres,
And fond the good man of the house pleying at chess
With his neyghbour, as trewe as he, that dwellid hym fast by.
But as sone as this burgeyse on Beryn cast his eye,
Sodeynly he stert up, and put the chess hym fro,
And toke Beryn by the hond, and seyd these wordis tho;
"*Benedicite!* what manere wynd hath y-brought you here?
Now wold to God I had wherof, or coud make yow chere!
But ye shull lowe my good wyll, and take such as ther is;
And of your gentil paciens suffir that is amys."
For well he wist by his aray, and by his countenaunce,
That of the shippis that wer y-com he had some governaunce.

Wherfor he made hym chere semeyng amyabill,
I-colerid all with cautelis, and wondir disseyvabill.
He bracyd hym by the myddil, and preyd hym sit adown
And lowly, with much worshipp, dressid his coshion.
"Lord God!" seyd this burgeyse, "I thank this ilk dey,
That I shuld see yow hole and sound here in my contray;
And yf ye list to tell the cause of yowr comyng,
And yf ye have nede to any manere thing,
And it be in my power, and thoughe I shuld it fech,
It shuld go right wonder streyte, I sey yow sikerlich,
But yee it had in haste, therwith yow to plese;
But now I see yow in my house, my hert is in grete ese."
The tothir burgeyse rose hym up, for to make rouse,
And axid of his felaw, that lord was of the house,
"Whens is this worshipfull man?" with wordis hend and low,
"For it semith by the manere, that ye hym shuld knowe,
And have sey hym tofore this tyme." "I have sene," quod the tothir,
"Be y-wis an hundrid sithis, and right as to my brothir,
I wold do hym plesaunce, in al that evir I can;
For trewlich in his contray he is a worshipful man."
"Forsoth, sir, and for your love, a thousand in this town
Wold do hym worship, and be right feyne and bown
To plese hym, and avail to have thonk of you."
"I woot wele, God them yeld, so have they oft er nowe;"
And arose up therwithall, and with his felaw spak
Of such manere mater, that faylid nevir of lakk;
So, when their counsell was y-do, this burgeyse preyd his fere
To sit adown be Beryn, and do hym sport and chere;
"And in the while I wol se to his hors;
For every gentil hert, afore his own cors,
Desirith that his riding best be servid and y-dight,
Rathir than hymself; wherfor wyth all my myght
I woll have an eye therto; and sich parte wyyn,

Wich tonne or pipe is best and most fyne."
Beryn was all abashid of his soden chere;
But nethirles the burgeyse sat hym somwhat nere,
And preyd hym, of his gentilnes, his name for to tell,
His contrey, and his lynnage; and he answerd snell,
"Berinus I am y-namid, and in Rome y-bore,
And have fyve shippis of myn own, las and more,
Full of marchaundise, ligging tofore the town;
But much mervaile have I, the good man is so boun
To serve me, and plese, and how it might be."
"Sir," seyd the burgeyse, "no mervelle it is to me:
For many a tyme, and oft, I cannot sey how lome,
He hath be in your marchis; and as I trow, in Room
Also he was y-bore, yf I ne ly shall."
"Yf it be so," quod Beryn, "no mervelle it is at all,
Thoughe he me have y-sey, and eke his gentill chere
Previth it all opynly; but be hym that bought me dere,
I have therof no knowlech, as I am now avysid."
With that cam in the good man, with countenaunce disgisid,
And had enqueryd of the child, that with Beryn cam,
Fro gynnyng to the endyng, and told his mastris name,
And of Agea, his mothir, and all thing as it was,
Wherthrough he was full perfite to answere to every cas.
So entryng into the hall the burgeys spak anoon,
"A! my gentill Beryn, alas! that under stonne
Myne own hert, Agea, thy mothir, leff and dere!
Now God assoyl hir soule! for nevir bettir chere
Had I of frend woman, ne nevir half so good.
Benedicite! a marchaunt comyng ovir flood!
Who brought yow in this purpos, and beth your fathirs heir?
Now by my trew conscience, ryght nygh in dispeyr
I wax for your sake; for now frendlese
Ye mowe wele sey that ye been; but yit for nethirles
Yee mut endure fortune, and hevynes put awey;

Ther is noon othir wisdom; also your shippis gey,
That been y-com in saveté, ought to amende your mode!
The wich, when we have dyned, I swere for by the rood,
We wol se them trewly, within and eke without,
And have wyne wyth us, and drynk al about."
They set, and wissh, and fed them, and had wherof plenté;
The burgeyse was a stuffid man, ther lakkid noon deynté.
So when they had y-dined, the cloth was up y-take,
A chese ther was y-brought forth; but tho gan sorowe to wake.
The ches was all of ivory, the meyné fressh and new,
I-pulsshid, and y-pikid, of white, azure, and blew.
Beryn beheld the cheker, it semed passyng feir.
"Sir," quoth the burgeys, "ye shul fynd her a payr,
That woll mate yow trewly in las than half a myle."
And was y-sed of sotilitie, Beryn to begile.
"Now in soth," quoth Beryn, "it myght wel hap nay.
And ner I must my shippis se, els I wold assay."
"What nedith that?" quoth the burgeyse; "trewlich I wol nat glose;
They been nat yit y-setelid ne fixid in the wose;
For I have sent thries, sith ye hither cam,
To wait oppon their governaunce; wherfor let set o game,
And I shall be the first that shall yow atast."
The meyné wer y-set up, and gon to pley fast.
Beryn wan the first, the second, and the third;
And at fourth game, in the ches amyd,
The burgeyse was y-matid; but that lust him wele;
And all was doon to bryng hym yn, as ye shul her snel.
"Sir," then seyd Beryn, "ye woot well how it is;
Me list no more to pley; for yee know this;
Wher is noon comparisoun, of what thing so it be,
Lust and liking fallith ther, as it semeth me,
Ne myrth is nat commendabill, that ay is by o side,

But it rebound to the tothir ; wherfor tyme is to ryde.
And as many thonkis, as I can or may,
Of my sport, and chere, and also of your pley."
" Nay i-wys, gentil Beryn, I woot ye wol nat go ;
For noriture wol it nat, for to part so,
And eke my condicioune ; but I ley somthing,
Is no more to pley, then who so shoke a ryng
Ther no man is wythin the ryngyng to answere ;
To shete a fethirles bolt almost as good me were.
But and ye wold this next game som maner wager legg,
And let the trowith, on both sidis, be morgage and y-plegg,
That whoso be y-matid, graunt and assent
To do the tothirs bidding ; and whoso do repent,
Drynk all the watir that salt is of the see."
Beryn belevid that he could pley betir than he,
And sodenly assentid, with hond in hond assurid ;
Men that stode besides y-cappid and y-hurid,
Wist wele that Beryn shuld have the wers mes ;
For the burgeyse was the best pleyer at ches
Of all the wyde marchis, or many a myle about.
But that ne wyst Beryn of, ne cast therof no doute.
He set the meyné efft ageyn, and toke betir hede
Then he did tofore, and so he had nede.
The burgeyse toke avysement long on every draught ;
So wyth an hour or too, Beryn he had y-caught
Somwhat oppon the hipp, that Beryn had the wers.
And albeit his mynd and wyll was for to curs,
Yit must he dure his fortune, when he was so fer y-go.
For who is that that fortune may alway undo ?
And namelich stont even in eche side
Of *pro* and *contra ;* but God help, down woll he glide.
But now a word of philosophy, that fallith to my mynd ;
Who take hede of the begynnyng, what fal shall of the end,
He leyth a bussh tofore the gap ther fortune wold in ryde.

But comynlich yowith forgetith that throughout the world.
Right so be Beryn I may wele sey, that counsaillis in rakid
Likly to lese his marchaundise, and go hymself al nakid.
Beryn studied in the ches, although it nought availid.
The burgeyse in the mene while with othir men consailid,
To fech the sergauntis in the town, for thing he had a-do.
So when they com were, they walked to and fro,
Up and down in the hall, as skaunce they knew nought;
And yit of all the purpose, wit, and mynd, and thought,
Of the untrew burgeyse, by his messengeris
They wer ful enformyd; wherfor with eye and eris,
They lay await full doggidly, Beryn to arest;
For therfor they wer aftir sent, and was their charge and hest.
Lord how shuld o sely lomb among wolvis weld,
And scape un-y-harmyd? it hath been seyn seld.
Kepe thy cut now, Beryn, for thow art in the case.
The hall was full of pepill, the serjauntis shewid their mase;
Beryn kast up his hede, and was ful sore amayid,
For then he was in certen the burgeyse had him betrayde.
"Draw on," seyd the burgeyse; "Beryn, ye have the wers;"
And every man to othir the covenaunt gan reherse.
The burgeyse, whils that Beryn was in hevy thought,
The next draught aftir he toke a rook for nought.
Beryn swat for angir, and was in hevy plight,
And drede ful sore in hert; for wele he wist al quyt
He shuld nat escape, and was in high distress;
And pryvelich in his hert, that evir he saw the ches
He cursid the day and tyme; but what avaylid that?
For wele he wist then, that he shuld be mate.
He gan to chaunge his colour, both pale, and wan.
The burgeyse seith, "Comyth nere, ye shul se this man
How he shull be matid, with what man me list;
He droughe and seyd, "Chek mate." The serjauntis wer
full prest,

And sesid Beryn by the scleve, and seyd, " Sirs, what think
ye for to do,"
Quoth Beryn to the serjauntis, " that ye me hondith so ?
Or what have I offendit ? or what have I seide ?"
" Trewlich," quoth the serjauntis, " it vaylith nat to breyde ;
Wyth us ye must a while, wher ye wol or no,
Tofore the steward of this town ; aryse, and trus, and go ;
And ther it shall be openyd, how wisely thou hast wrought :
This is the end of our tale, make it never so tought."
" Sirs, farith feir, ye have no nede to hale."
" Pas forth," quoth the serjauntis, " we wol nat her thy tale."
" Yis, sirs, of your curtesy, I prey yow of o word ; 1831
Although my gentill hoost hath pleyd with me in borde,
And y-won a wager, ye have nought to doon ;
That is betwene hym and me, ye have nothyng to doon."
The hoest made an hidouse cry, in ge-sol-re-ut the haut,
And set his hond in kenebowe, he lakkid nevir a faute;
" Wenyst thow," seid he to Beryn, " for to scorne me ?
What evir thow speke, or stroute, certis it woll nat be ;
Of me shalt thow have no wrong, pas forth a betir pase ;
In presence of our steward I woll tell my case." 1840
" Why, hoost, sey yee this in ernest or in game ?
Ye know my contray, and my mothir, my lynnage, and my
name ;
And thus ye have y-seyd me ten sith on this dey."
" Ye, what though I seyd so ? I know wele it is nay ;
Ther lyth no more therto, but anothir tyme
Leve me so much the les, when thow comyst by me.
For all that evir I seyd was to bryng the in care ;
And now I have my purpose, I woll nothyng the spare."
Thus janglyng to ech othir, endenting every pase,
They entrid both into the hall ther the steward was ; 1850
Evandir was his name, that sotill was, and so fell,

He must be well avysid tofore hym shuld tell.
Anothir burgeyse wyth hym was, provost of the cetė,
That Hanybald was y-clepid, but of sotiltie
He passid many anothir, as ye shul here sone.
Berynus hoost gan to tell al thyng as it was doon,
Fro gynnyng to the endyng, the wordis wyth the dede;
And how they made their covenaunt, and wager how they leyd.
"Now, Beryn", quoth the steward, "thow hast y-herd this tale;
How and in what manere thow art y-brought in bale.
Thow must do his byddyng, thow maist yn no wyse flee,
Or drynk all the watir that salt is in the see.
Of these too thingis, thow must chese the toon;
Now be well avysid, and sey thy will anoon.
To do yee both law, I may no betir sey,
For thow shalt have no wrong, as ferforth as I mey;
Chese the self right as the list, and wit thow nothyng me,
Though thow chese the wers, and let the betir be."
Beryn stode astonyd, and no mervaill was,
And preyd the steward of a dey to answere to the case;
"For I might lightlich in som word be y-caught,
And eke it is right herd to chese, of to that beth right naught.
But and it wer your likyng to graunt me day tyl to morowe,
I wold answer, through Goddis help." "Then must thow fynd a borowe,"
Seyd the steward to Beryn, "and yit it is of grace."
"Now herith me," quoth Hanybald, "I prey, a litil spase.
He hath fyve shippis ondir the town, lyggyng on the strond,
The wich been sufficiant y-sesed in our hond,
By me, that am your provost to execute the law."
"He must assent;" quoth Evander, "let us onys here his saw."

"I graunt wele," quoth Beryn, "sith it may be noon othir."
Then Hanybald arose hym up, to sese both ship and strothir;
And toke Beryn wyth hym; so talking on the wey,
"Beryn," quoth Hanybald, "I sure the be my fey,
That thow art much y-bound to me this ilk dey,
So is thy ple amendit by me, and eke of such a wey
I am avysid in thy cause, yf thow wolt do by rede,
That lite or nought by my counsaill ought the to drede.
Yee know wele, to morowe the dey of ple is set,
That ye mut nedis answere; or els wythout lett
I must yeld them your shippis, I may in no wyse blyn;
So have I undirtake. But the merchaundise wythin
Is nat in my charge, ye knowe as wele as I,
To make therof no lyvery; wherfor now wysely
Worch, and do aftir rede; let all your marchaundise
Be voidit of your shippis, and at hiest prise
I wol have it every dele in covenaunt; yf ye list,
To see myne house here onys tofore, I hold it for the best;
Wher ye shul se of divers londis, housis to or thre
Ful of marchaundise, that through this grete ceté
Is no such in preve, I may right well avowe.
So when ye have all seyn, and I have your also,
Let som bargen be y-made betwene us both too."
"Graunt mercy, sir," quoth Beryn, "your profir is feir and good;
Feyn wold I do theraftir, yf I undirstood
I myght wythout blame of breking of arest."
"Yis," quoth Hanybald, "at my perell me trust."
So to Hanybalds house togithir both they rode;
And fond, as Hanybald had y-seyd, an houge house, long and brode,
Full of marchaundise, as rich as it may be,
Passyng all the marchaunts that dwellid in that ceté.

Thus when all was shewid, they dronke and toke their leve,
To se Beryns shippis in hast they gon to meve.
And when that Hanybald was avysid what charge the shippis bere,
He gan to speke in his wyse, ascaunce he rought nere
Whethir he bargeynyd or no, and said thus: "Beryn, frend,
Your marchaundise is feir and good, now let us make an end,
If yee list, I can no more, yee knowith how it is.
Com of short let tuk them yn, methinkith I sey nat mys,
And then your meyné, and ye, and I to my house shall we go,
And of the marchaundise I saw, I wol nat part therfro;
Chese of the best of that ye find there.
Throughout the long house, ther shall no man you dere,
And therwith shall your shippis be fillid all fyve;
I can sey no betir, yf ye list to dryve
This bargeyn to the end, counsellith with your men;
I may nat long tary, I must needis hen."
Beryn clepid his meyné, counsell for to take;
But his first mocioune was of the woo, and wrake,
And all the tribulacioune, for pleying at ches,
That he had every dele, his shame, and his dures,
Fro poynt to poynt, and how it stode, he told how it was;
And then he axid counsaill, what best was in the case,
To chaunge with the burgeyse, or els for to leve.
Eche man seyd his avise; but al that they did meve,
It wer to long a tale for to tell it here.
But fynally at end, they cordit al in fere,
That the chaunge shuld stond; for as the case was fall
They held it clerely for the best; and went forth wythall,
The next wey that they couth, to Hanybaldis plase.

But now shul ye here the most sotill fallace,
That evir man wrought till othir, and highest trechery,
Wich Hanybald had wrought hymself to this company.
"Go in," quoth Hanybald, "and chese, as thy covenaunt is."
In goon these Romeyns ech oon, and fond amys;
For there was nothing, that eny man might se,
Saff the wall, and tyle stonys, and tymbir made of tre.
For Hanybald had do void it, of all thing that was there!
Whils he was at shippis his men awey it bere.
When Beryn saw the house ler, that full was thertofore
Of riche marchaundise, "alas!" thought he, "I am lore,
I am in this world;" and wittith well, his hert
Was nat at all in likeing, and out-ward gan he stert,
Like half a wood man, and bete both his lippis,
And gan to hast fast towards his own shippis,
To kepe his good within, wyth al that evir he myght,
That it were nat dischargit, as hym thought verrey right.
But al for naught was his hast; for thre hundred men,
As fast as they myght, they bere the good then,
Through ordenaunce of Hanybald, that pryvelich tofore
Had purposid and y-cast shuld be out y-bore.
Beryn made a swyff pase, ther myght no man hym let;
But Hanybald was ware i-nough, and with Beryn met,
"All for nought, Beryn; thou knowist well and fyne,
The shippis ben areistid, and the good is myne.
What woldest thow do ther? thow hast ther nought to do,
I wol hold thy covenaunt, and thow myne also.
For yit saw I nevir man, that was of thy manere;
Sometyme thou wolt avaunte, and some tyme arere;
Now thow wolt, and now thow nolt; wher shul men the fynd?
Now sey oon, and sith anothir; so variant of mynd
Saw I nevir tofore this dey man so variabill;

Sith I the fynd in such plyte; our bargen for to stabill,
We woll tofore the steward, ther we both shull have right."
"Nay, forsoth," quoth Beryn. "Yis treulich the tire,"
Quoth Hanybald, "wher thou wolt or no; and so I the charge,
As provost; know, that yf me list, my warrant is so large,
And thow make eny diffence, to bynym thy lyffe;
Take thyn hors, it gaynyth nat for to make stryffe."
So wyth sorrowfull hert Beryn toke his hors;
And softly seyd to his men, "Of me," quoth he, "no fors;
But wend to your shippis, I wol com when I may.
Ye seth well everichone I may no bet awey."
Now here by this same tale, both fre and bond
Mow fele in their wittis, and eke ondirstonde,
That litill vailith wysdom or els governaunce,
Ther fortune evir werrith, and eke hap, and chaunce.
Or what availith bounté, bewté, or riches,
Friendship, or sotilitie, or els hardines,
Gold, good, or catell, wyt, or hy lynage,
Lond, or lordis service, or els high peerage?
What may all this avayle, ther fortune is a foo?
I-wis right litil, or nevir a dele; full oft it fallith so.
So shortly to pass ovir, they fill to such an end,
That Beryn shuld have day ageyn a morowe, and so to wend
He set him in ful purpose to his shippis-ward.
But yit or he cam ther, he fond the passage hard;
For how he was begiled, throughout all the towne
Ther and ther a coupill gan to speke and to roune;
And every man his purpose was to have parte,
With falsnes, and with sotilitees, they coud noon othir art.
Beryn rode forth in his wey, his page ran hym by,
Full sore adred in hert, and cast about his eye
Up and down, even long the strete, and for angir swet.

And er he had riden a stones cast, a blynd man with him met,
And spak no word, but sesid him fast by the lap;
And cried, "out and harowe!" and nere hym gan to stap.
"All for nought," quoth this blynd, "what wenyst thow for to skape?"
Beryn had thought to prik forth, and thought it had be jape.
The blynd man cast awey his staff, and set on both his hondis:
"Nay thow shalt nat void," quoth he, "for all thy rich londis,
Tyll I of the have reson, lawe, and eke righte;
For trewlich, I may wit it the, that I have lost my sight."
So for ought that Beryn coud othir speke, or prey,
He myght in no wyse pas, ful sore he gan to may.
And namelich for the pepill throng hym so about,
And eche man gan hym hond, and seyd, "Wythout doute
Ye must nedis stond, and rest, and bide the lawe,
Be ye nevir so grete a man." "So wold I wondir sawe,"
Quoth Beryn, "yf yee had cause; but I know noon."
"No, thow shalt know or thow go, thow hast nat al y-doon,"
The blynd man seyd to Beryn. "Tell on then," quoth he.
"Here is no place to plete," the blynd man seyd age;
"Also we have no juge here of autorité;
But Evandir the steward shall deme both the and me;
When I my tale have told, and thow hast made answere,
By that tyme men shull know how thow canst the clere.
Now, soveren God, I thank the of this ilk dey,
Then I may preve the be my lyve, of word and eke of fay
Fals, and eke untrewe of covenaunt thow hast y-makid.
But litill is thy charge now, though that I go nakid,
That sometyme wer partinere, and rekenyest nevir yit;

But thou shalt here, or we depart, therof a litill witt.
For after comyn seyng, evir atte ende
The trowith woll be previd, how so men evir trend."
Thus they talkid to eche othir, tyl they com into the plase,
And wer y-entrid in the hall ther the steward was.
The blynd man first gan to spake, "Sir steward, for Goddis sake,
Herith me a little while; for her I have y-take
He that hath do me wrong most of man of mold;
Be my help, as law woll, for hym that Judas sold.
Ye know wele that oft tyme I have to yow y-pleynid,
How I was betrayed, and how I was y-peynid,
And how a man some tyme and I our yen did chaunge;
This is the same persone, though that he make it straunge.
I toke them hym but for a tyme, and wenyd trewly
Myne to have y-had ageyn; and so both he and I
Were ensurid uttirlich, and was our both will;
But for myne the bettir were, wrongfullich and ille
He hath them kept hitherto, wyth much sorowe and pyne
To me, as ye wele knowith; because I have nat myne,
I may nat se with his; wherfor me is full woo;
And evirmore ye seyd, that ye myght nothing do,
Without presence of the man that wrought me this unquert:
Now, sith he is tofore you now, let hym nat astert.
For many tyme and oft yee behete me,
And he myght be take, he shuld do me gre.
Sith ye of hym be sesid, howevir so yee tave,
Let him nevir pas tyl I myn yen have."
"Beryn," quod Evandir, "herist thow nat thyselve
How sotilly he pletith, and ware by eche halve?"
Beryn stode all muet, and no word he spake.
And that was tho his grace; ful sone he had be take,
And he had mysseyd onys, or els y-seyd nay;

For then he had been negatyff, and undo for ay.
For they were grete seviliouns, and usid probat law,
Where evirmore affirmatyf shuld preve his own saw.
Wherfor they wer so querelouse of all myght com in mynd,
Though it wer nevir in dede y-do; such matere they wold fynd
To benym a man his good, through som manir gile.
For the blynd man wist right wele, he shuld have lost his whyle,
To make his pleynt on Beryn, and suyd oppon his good,
For shippis, and eke marchaundise, in a balaunce stode;
Therfor he made his chalenge his yen for to have,
Or els he shuld for them fyne, yf he wold them have,
And ligg for them in hostage, tyll the fynaunce cam.
This was all the sotilté of the blynd man.
Beryn stode all muet, and no word he spak.
"Beryn," quod Evander, "lest thow be y-take
In defaute of answere, thou myghtist be condempnyd,
Be right wele avysed, sith thou art examenyd."
"Sir," seyd Beryn, "it wold litill availe,
To answere thus aloon, without good counsail.
And also ferthermore, full litill I shuld be levid,
Whatevir I answerd, thus stonyd and reprevid;
And eke my wit doith faille, and no wondir is.
Wherfor I wold prey yow, of yowr gentilnes,
To graunt me dey tyll to morowe I might be avysid
To answere forth, wyth othir that on me been surmysid."
"Deperdeux," quod the steward, "I graunt well it be so."
Beryn toke his leve, and hopid to pas and go.
But as sone as Beryn was on his hors ryding,
He met a woman and a child wyth sad chere comyng,
That toke hym by the reyn, and held hym wondir fast,
And seid, "Sir, voidith nat, yit vailith nat to haste;

Ye mow in no wyse scape, ye must nedis abyde ;
For though ye list to know me nat, yit lien by your side
I have ful many a tyme, I can nat tell yow lome.
Come tofore the steward, ther shall ye here your dome,
Of thing that I shall put on yow, and no word for to ly ;
To leve me thus aloon it is your villany.
Alas ! the day and tyme that evir I was your make !
Much have I endurid this too yere, for your sake.
But now it shall be know who is in the wronge."
Beryn was all abashid, the pepill so thik thronge
About hym in eche syde ; for ought that he couth peyn,
He must to the steward of fyne fors ageyn.
Now shull ye here how sotillich this woman gan hir tale,
In presence of the steward ; with colour wan, and pale,
Petously she gan to tell, and said, " Sir, to yow
Full oft I have compleyned, in what manere and how
My childis fathir left me by my self aloon,
Wythout help, or comforte, as grete as I myght goon,
Wyth my son here and his, that shame it is to tell
The penury that I have y-had, that afors sell
I must nedis myne aray, wher me list or lothe,
Or els I must have beggit for to fynd us both.
For there was nevir woman I leve, as I ges,
For lak of hede of lyvelode, that lyvid in more distres,
Then I my self for oft tyme, for lak of mete and drink.
And yit I trow no creature was feyner for to swinke
My lyff to sustene ; but as I mut nede,
Above all othir thingis, to his child take hede,
That wondir is, and mervaile, that I am alyve ;
For the sokyng of his child, right, as it were a knyve,
It ran into my hert, so low I was of mode
That well I woot in certen, without percell of my blode,
His child I have y-norishid, and that is by me seen ;

For my rede colour is turnid into grene.
And he that cause is of all, here he stondith by me ;
To pay for the fosteryng me thinkith it is tyme.
And sith he is my husbond, and hath on me no rowith,
Let hym make amendis in saving of his trowith.
And yf he to any word onys can say nay,
Lo ! here my gage, al redy to preve all that I sey."
The stewarde toke the gage, and spak in soft wyse,
" Of this petouse compleynt a mannys hert may grise ;
For I know in percell hir tale is nat all lese,
For many a tyme and oft, this woman that here is
Hath y-be tofore me, and pleynid of hir greffe ;
But wythout a party hir cause myght nat presse.
Now thou art here present that she plenyth on,
Make thy defence now, Beryn, as wele as thow con."
Beryn stode al muet, and no word he spak.
" Beryn," quod the steward, " doist thow sclepe, or wake ?
Sey onys oon or othir ; is it soth, or nay,
As she hath declarid ? tell on, saunce delay."
" Lord God !" quod Beryn, " what shuld it me availe,
Among so many wise, without right good counsaill,
To tell eny tale ? full litil as I ges.
Wherfor I wold prey you, of your gentilnes,
Graunt me day tyl to morowe to answer forth with othir."
" I graunt wele," quod the steward, " but for fathir and mothir,
Thow getist no lenger tyme, pleynly I the tell."
Beryn toke his leve, his hert gan to swell
For pure verrey anguysh ; and no mervaill was ;
And who is that nold, and he wer in such case ?
For al his trist and hope in eny worldlich thing
Was cleen from hym passid, save sorowe and myslykyng.
For body, good, and catell, and lyff, he set at nought,

So was his hert y-woundit for angir and for thought.
Beryn passyd softly, and to his hors gan go;
And when he was without the gatis, he lokid to and fro,
And could noon othir countenaunce, but to his page he seyd,
"Preciouse God in heven! how falsly am I betrayed?
I trow no man alyve stont in wers plight.
And all is for my synne, and for my yong delite;
And pryncipally, above all thyng, for grete unkyndnes
That I did to my mothir; for litill hede i-wis
I toke of hir, this know I wele, whils she was alyve:
Therfor al this turment is sent to me so ryve.
For ther was nevir woman kynder to hir child
Than she was; and ther ageyns nevir thing so wyld,
Ne so evil thewid, as I was myself;
Therfor sorowe and happs environ me by eche helve,
That I note whithir ryde, nethir up ne down,
Ther been so many devillis dwellyng in this town,
And so ful of gile and trechery also,
That well I woot in certeyn they woll me ondo.
Now wold to God in hevyn, what is my best rede?"
He toke his hors to his page, and thus to hym he sayd,
"Lede my hors to ship-ward, and take it to some man;
And I woll go on foot as pryvely as I can,
And assay, yf I may, in eny manere wise,
Escape unarrested more in such manner wise."
The child toke his maistirs hors, and laft hym there aloon,
Walking forth on foot, making oft his moon;
And in his most musing, I can nat sey how lome,
He wishid nakid as he was bore he had be in Room.
And no mervaill was it, as the case stode;
For he drad more to lese his eyen, than he did his shippis, or his good.

Now yee that listith to dwell and here of aventure,

How petously dame Fortune, Beryn to inure,
Turnyth hir whele about in the wers side;
With hap of sorowe, and anguyssh, she gynyth for to ride.
Beryn passid toward the strond, ther his shippis were;
But yee mow ondirstond, his hert was ful of fere:
Yet nethirles he sat hym down softly on a stall,
Semyryfe for sorowe, and lenyd to the wall,
For turment that he had, so wery he was, and feynt;
And to God above thus he made his pleynt:
"Glorious God in heven! that al thing madist of nought;
Why sufferist thow these cursid men to stroy me for nought?
And knowest well myn innocent, that I have no gilt
Of al that they pursu me, or on me is pilt."
And in the meen, whils that Beryn thus gan pleyn,
A cachepoll stode besidis, his name was Machaign,
And herd all the wordis, and knew also tofore
How Beryn was turmented, both with las and more.
It was y-sprong through the town, so was he full ensensid,
How he hym would engyne, as he had propensid;
And had araid hym sotillich, as man of contemplacioune,
In a mantell wyth the list, with fals dissimulacioune,
And a staff in his honde, as thoughe he febill were;
And drow hym toward Beryn, and seid in this manere;
"The high God of heven, that al thing made of nought,
Bles yow, gentill sir, for many an hevy thought
Me thinkith that ye have, and no wondir is;
But, good sir, dismay yow nat, but levith yowr hevines,
And yf ye list to tell me somewhat of your distres,
I hope to God Almighty in party it redres
Through my pore counsaill, and so I have many oon;
For I have peté on yow, be God, and by Seint Jon!
And eke pryvy hevines doith ech man apeir,
Sodeynly, or he be ware, and fall in dispeir.

And who be in that plage, that man is incurabill ;
For consequent comyth aftir sekenes abominabill ;
And therfor, sir, diskeverith yowe, and be nothing adrad."
" Graunt mercy, sir," quod Beryn, " ye seme trew and sad ;
But o thing lyith in myn hert, I note to whom to trust ;
For tho that dyned me to dey ordeyned me to arest."
" A ! sir, be yow that man ? of yow I have y-herd.
Gentill sir, doutith nat, ne be nothing aferd
Of me, for I shall counsell yow as well as I can ;
For trewlich in the ceté dwellith many a fals man,
And usyn litil els but falshode, wrong, and wyle,
And how they might straungers with trechery begile.
But ye shul do right wisely somewhat be my counsail.
Speke with the steward, that may you most availl ;
For ther is a comyn byword, yf ye it herd havith,
Wele setith he his peny, that the pound savith.
The steward is a covetouse man, that long hath desirid
A knyff I have in kepeing, wherwith his hert i-wirid
Shall be yow to help, in covenaunte that yee
Shall give me fyve mark, your treu frend to be.
The knyff is feir, I tell yow ; yit nevir tofore this day
Myght the steward have it for aught he coud prey ;
The wich he shuld gyve hym, the betir for to spede,
And behote hym twenty pound to help yow in your nede ;
And yf he grauntith, trustith wele, ye stond in good plight,
For betir is, then lese all, the las the more quyt.
And I woll go wyth yow straight to his plase,
And knele down, and speke first, to amend yowr case,
And sey yee be my cosin, the betir shul ye spede ;
And when that I have all y-told, the knyff to hym yee bede."
Beryn thankid hym hertlich, and on hym gan trust,
With hond in hond ensurid, and all for the best ;
Beryn thought noon othir, al that it othir was.

Machaign hym comfortid, talkyng of their case,
And passid forth stylly toward the steward blyve,
Beryn and Machaign; but Beryn bare the knyff,
And trust much in his felawe to have some help.
But or they departid were, they had no cause to yelp
Of no maner comfort, as ye shull here anoon.
For as sone as Machaigne tofore the steward com,
He fill plat to the erth, a grevous pleynt and an huge
He made, and seyd, "Sir steward, now be a trew juge
Ageyns this fals treytour, that stondith me besyde;
Let take of hym gode hede, els he woll nat abide.
Now mercy God, steward, for yee have herd me yore
For my fathir, Melan, pleyn to you ful sore,
That with seven dromedarys, as I have told yow lome,
With marchandise chargit, went to-ward Rome;
And it is seven yere ago, and a litill more,
Of hym, or of his gooddis, that I herd les or more.
And yit I have enquerid, as bysely as I couthe,
And met nevir man yit that me coud tell with mowth
Any tyding of hym, onto this same day;
But now I know too much, alass! I may wel sey."
When Beryn herd these wordis, he kist down his hede;
"Allas!" he thought in hert, "alas! what is my rede?"
And would fayn have voidit, and out-ward gan to stapp.
But Machaigne arose, and sesid by the lapp;
"Thow shalt nat void," he seid; "my tale is nat y-do;
For, be trowith of my body, yf thou scapidist so,
I shuld nevir have mery whils I wer on lyve."
And set hond fast on Beryns othir scleve,
And seid, "Good sir steward, my tale to the end
I pray ye wold here; for wend how men wend,
There may no man hele murthir, but it will out last;
The same knyff my fathir bere, when he of contré past,

Let serch wele this felon, ther ye shul hym find ;
I know the knyff wele i-nough, it is nat out of my mynd ;
The cotelere dwellith in this toun that made the same knyff ;
And for to preve the trowith, he shall be here as blyve."
Beryn swat for angir, his hert was full of fere ;
He toke the knyff to the steward, or he serchid where.
The steward onto Beryn, " My frend, lo !" quoth he,
" And thow think the well about, this is foule plee ;
I can know noon othir, but thow must, or thow go,
Yeld the body of Melan and his good also.
Now be well avysid ageyn to morrowe day ;
Then shalt thou have thy jugement ; ther is no more to say."
When Beryn fro the steward thus departid was,
And was without the gate, he lokid oppon the plase,
And cursid it wondir bitterly in a fervent ire,
And wishid many tymes it had been a feir.
" For I trowe that man of lyve was nevir wors betrayid
Then I am ; and therwithal my hert is cleen dismayid.
For here I have no frendship, but am all counselles ;
And they been falsher then Judas, and eke mercyles.
A, Lord God in hevyn ! that my hert is woo !
And yit suyrly I mervel nat though that it be so ;
For yit in all my lyve, sithe I ought understode,
Had I nevir wyl for to lern good ;
Foly I hauntid it evir, ther myght no man me let ;
And now he hath y-paid me, he is cleen out of my dett.
For whils I had tyme, wysdom I myght have lernyd ;
But I drow me to foly and wold nat be governed,
But had al myne own wyll and of no man aferd ;
For I was nevir chastisid ; but now myne own yerd
Betith me to sore, the strokis been to hard,
For these devillis of this town takith but litil reward
To sclee my body to have my good ; the day is set tomorrowe.

Now wold to God I wer in grave! for it wer end of sorowe.
I was i-wis to much a fole; for hate I had to Rame,
I wold forsake myn heritage; therfor sorowe and shame
Is oppon me fall, and right wele deservid;
For I toke none maner hede, when my mothir stervid,
And disobeyid my fathir, and set him at naught also;
What wondir is it than though that I have woo?
Fortune and eke wisdom have werrid with me evir,
And I with them in all my lyf, for fortune was me levir
Then eny wit or governaunce for them too I did hate;
And though I wold be at oon, now it is to late.
O myghtfull God in heven! wher was evir man
That wrought hymself more foly than I myself did than?
Acursid be the tyme that I out of Rome went,
That was my fathirs right heir, of lyvelode, and of rent,
And al the ryall lordship that he hath in the town.
Had I had wit and grace, and hold me low and boun,
It wer my kynd now among my baronage,
To hauk, and to hunt, and eke to pley and rage
With feir freshe ladies, and daunce when me list.
But now it is to late to speke of had I wist.
But I fare like the man that for to swele his flyes
He stert into the bern, and aftir stre he hies,
And goith about the wallis with a brennyng wase,
Tyll it was at last that the leem and blase
Entrid into the chynys, where the weate was,
And kissid so the eevse, that brent was all the plase;
But first in the begynnyng, tyll feer smote in the raftris,
He toke no manere kepe, and thought of nothing aftir
What perell there myght fall, ne more did I, y-wis,
That wold forsake myn honour, for the unkyndnes
Of Rame, that was my stepmothir; for yf I shall nat ly,
They beth soure, wherfor the more wisely

I shuld have wrought, had I had wit, and suffrid for a tyme,
And aftir come to purpose wel i-nowghe of myne.
But evil avengit he is deol, that for a litil mode,
And angir to his neybour, sellith away his good,
And goith hymself a beggyng aftir in breff tyme,
He mut be countid a lewd man in all manere ryme.
So have I wrought and wers ; for I dout of my lyve,
How that it shal stond, for plukking of my scleve
The knyff that was me take, as ye have herd tofore ;
And yit it grevith mine hert also much more
Of myn own pepill, that no disese aservid.
I wote wel aftir pleding, ryght nought woll be reservyd
To sustene their lyvis, I trow ryght nought or lite,
And peraventur lightly stond in wors plight.
Of me it is no fors, though I be thus arayed,
But it is dole and peté that they shull be betrayid,
That hath nought aservid, but for my gilt aloon."
And when that Beryn in this wise had y-made his mone,
A crepill he saw comyng with grete spede and haste,
Oppon a stilt ondir his kne bound wondir fast,
And crouch under his armys, with hondis al forskramyd.
" Alas !" quoth this Beryn, " shall I be more examenyd ?"
And gan to turn aside onto the see stronde ;
And the crippill aftir, and wan oppon hym londe.
Tho began Beryn to drede in-wardlich sore,
And thought thus in his hert, " Shall I be comberid more ?
And it wer Goddis wyll my sorowe for to cese,
Me thinkith I have i-nowghe ;" the cripill began to preche
And had y-raught nere hond Beryn by the scleve.
Beryn turnyd, as an hare, and gan to ren blyve ;
But the cripill knew betir the pathis, smale and grete,
Then Beryn, so tofore hym he was, and gan hym mete.
When Beryn saw it vaylid naught to renne, ne to lepe,

What for dole and anguyssh, no word myght he speke ;
But stode still amasid, and starid fast about.
The cripill began to speke, " Sir, to drede or to dout
Of me wold ye right light, and ye knew myne hert ;
So where ye like, well or ill, fro me shall ye nat part,
Tyl I have tretid with yow, and yee with me also,
Of all your soden happis, your myscheff, and your wo.
For by the tyme that I have knowlech of your case,
Your rennyng and your trotting into an esy pas
I shall turn or that we twyn, so ye aftir my stole
Woll do, and as I rede yow ; for ye wer a fole
When ye cam first alonde, ye had met with me ;
For I wold have ensensid yow all the iniquité
Of these fals merchandis, that dwellen in this town,
And outid all your chaffare without gruch or groun.
For had ye dwellid within your shippis, and nat go them among,
Then had ye been undaungerid, and quyt of all their wrong
On yow that ben surmysid through fals suggestioune."
Beryn gan to sigh, unneth he might soune,
Saf o word or tweyn, and mercy was the first,
Preying with all his herte, that he myght have his rest,
And be no more enpledit, but pas fro hym quyte.
" Good sir," quoth Beryn, " doith me no more dispite,
And suffir me to pas, and have on me routhe ;
And I suyr yow faithfully, have here my trowith,
To morowe when I have pledit, and eny thing be laft
Of ship or merchaundise, afore the ship or baft,
I woll shew yow all i-fere, and opyn every chest,
And put it in your grace, to do what ye lest."
And in the meen while that Beryn gan to clapp,
The crypill nyghid hym nere and nere, and hent hym by the lap ;

And as sone as Beryn knew that he was in honde,
He unlacyd his mantell, for drede of some command,
And pryvelich ovir his shuldris let hym down glide;
And had levir lese his mantell then abide.
The cripill all perceyvid, and hent him by the scleve
Of his nethir surcote; "Alas! now mut I strive,"
Thought Beryn by himself; "now I am y-hent,
There helpith naught save strengith;" therwith the scleve to rent.
Beryn gan to scappe, he sparid for no cost.
"Alas!" thought this cripill, "this man wol be lost,
And be ondo for evir, but he counsell have;
I-wis, thoughe he be lewde, my contremen to save;
Yit will I my besines do, and peyn that I may,
Sith he is of Room, for that is my contray."
This cripill was an hundrit yere ful of age;
With a long thik berd, and a trew visage
He had; and manly and july was he;
And Geffrey was his name, y-know in that contré.
"Alas!" thought this Geffrey, "this man hath grete drede
Of me, that by my power wold help hym in his nede.
I-wis, though he be nyce, untaught, and unwise,
I woll nat for his foly leve myne enpryse."
And lept aftir Beryn, and that in right good spede.
Beryn was so sore agast, he toke no maner hede
To look onys bak-ward, tyll he to the watir cam;
Then lokid he behynd, and saw sir clekam
Commaund wondir fast, with staff and with his stilt;
"Alas!" thought Beryn, "I now am y-spilt;
For I may no ferthir, without I wold me droune;
I note, wich were the betir, or go ageyn to toune."
Geffrey was so nygh com, that Beryn myght nat fle.
"Good sir," quoth this Geffrey, "why do yee void me?

For, by heven quene, that bare Crist in hir barme!
But right as to myself, I wol yow no more harm.
Sittith down here by me oppon this see stronde;
And yf ye drede any thing, clepe yowr men to londe;
And let them be here with us all our speche tyme.
For I woll nat feyn oon word, as makers doon to ryme,
But counsell yow as prudently as God woll send me grace;
Take comfort to yow, and herk a litill spase."
And when that Beryn had y-herd his tale to the end,
And how goodly as Geffrey spak, as he were his frende;
None obstant his drede, yet part of sapience
Stremyd into his hert, for his eloquence;
And seyd, "God me counsaill, for his high mercy!
For I have herd this same dey men as sctilly
Speke, and of your semblant, and in such manere,
And byhete me frendship out-ward by their chere,
But in-ward it was contrary their intellectioune;
Wherfor the blame is les, though I suspectioune
Have of yowr wordis, lest othir be yowr entent;
For I note whom to trust, by God omnipotent.
Yit nethirles, yf your will is to com into the ship with me,
I woll somwhat do by your rede, how so it evir be."
"Then," quoth Geffrey, "if it be so that I in yowr powere
Entir into your shippis, and yow help in yowr mystere,
That yee ageyn yowr adversaryes shull have the betir syde,
And gyve yow such counsell to bate down their pride,
And that yee wynne in every pleynt, al so much or more
As they purpose to have of yow; if they be down y-bore,
And ye have amendis for their iniquité,
And I yow bring to this end, what shall my guerdon be?"
"In verrey soth," quoth Beryn; "if I yow may trust,
I woll quyte yow trowly, I make yow behest."
"In feith then," quoth Geffray, "I woll with yow wende."

" What is yowr name," seid Beryn, " though my frende ?"
" Gefferey," he said ; " but in these marchis I was nat bore ;
But I have dwellid in this cetè yeeris heretofore
Ful many, and turmented wers then wer yee ;
And endurid for my trowith much adversité.
For I wold in no wise suffir their falshedes ;
For in all the world so corrupt of their dedis
Been noon men alyve, I myght ryght well avow ;
For they set all their wittis in wrong, all that they mowe.
Wherfor full many a tyme, the grettist of them and I,
Have stonden in altercatioune, for their trechery.
For I had in valewe in trew marchaundise
A thousand poundes, all have they take in such maner wise.
So ferforth to save my blode no longer myght I dryve dure ;
For drede of wors, thus thought I myself to disfigure ;
And have among them twelve yere go right in this plighte,
And evir have had in memory how I myght them quyte ;
And so I hope now, as sotill as they be,
With my wit engine them, and help yow and me.
My lymes been both hole and sound ; me nedith stilt, ne crouch."
He cast asyde them both, and lepe oppon an huche,
And down ageynes ; and walkid to and fro,
Up and down, within the ship ; and shewed his hondis tho,
Stretching forth his fingris, in sight and all about,
Without knot, or knor, or eny sign or goute ;
And dyght them efft ageyns right disfetirly,
Som to ride ech othir, and som awe-ward wry.
Geffrey was right myghty, and wele his age did bere ;
For natur was more substantiall, when tho dayis wer,
Then now in our tyme ; for all thing doith waste,
Saff vile and cursid lyving, that growith all to faste.
What shuld I tell more ? but Geffrey sat hym down,

And Beryn hym besydis; the Romeyans gan to rown,
And marvelled much in Geffrey, of his disgisenes,
And Beryn had anothir thought, and spak of his distres.
"Now, Geffrey," seid this Beryn, "and I durst trust in yowe,
That and ye knewe eny man that is alyve anowe,
That had of discrecioune so much influence,
To make my party good to morowe in my defence,
And delivir me of sorowe, as ye behote have,
I wold become his legeman, as God my soul save."
"That wer to much," quoth Geffrey, "that wol I yow relese;
But I desire of othir thing to have yowr promes,
That and I bryng yowr enmyes into such a traunce,
To make for yowr wrongis to you right high fenaunce,
And so declare for you, that with you pas such dome,
That yee oppon your feith bryng me at Rome,
Yf God wol send yow wethir, and grace to repase."
Quod Beryn, "But I grant yow, I wer lewder than an asse.
But or I fullich trust yow, holdith me excusid;
I woll go counsell with my men, lest they it refusid."
Beryn drew asyde, and spak with his meyné;
And expressid every word, in what plight and degré
That he stode, from poynt to poynt, and of his fals arestis.
His meyné were astonyd, and starid forth as bestis.
"Spekith som word," quod Beryn, "sith I am betrayd;
Yee have y-herd what Geffrey to me hath sayd."
These Romeyns stode alle still, o word ne cowd they meve,
And eke it passid their wittis; then Beryn gan releve,
And to Geffrey eft ageyn, and mercy hym besought;
"Help me, sir," quod Beryn, "for his love that us bought,
Dying on the rood!" and wept full tendirly;
"For but ye help," quod Beryn, "ther is no remedy;
For comfort, nethir counsaill, of my men have I noon;
Help me, as God yow help, and els I am undoon!"

When Geffrey saw this Beryn so distract and wept,
Pité into eche veyn of his hert crept;
"Allas!" quod Geffrey, "I might nat do a more synful dede,
I leve by my trowith, then fayl yow in this nede;
Faill me God in heven, yf that I yow faill,
That I shall do my besines, my peyn, and my travaile,
To help yow be my power, I may no ferther go."
"Yis, yee behete me more," seid Beryn tho,
"That yee wold help me at all that I shuld stond cler."
Beryn gan to wepe, and make wers chere.
"Stillith yow," quod Geffrey, "for how so evir ye tire,
More than my power ye ought nat desire.
For thorough the grace of God ye shul be help wele,
I have therof no dout; but trewlich I you tele,
That ye woll hold me covenaunte, and I woll yow also,
To bryng me at Rome, when it is all y-do.
In signe of trowith of both sidis of our acordment,
Eche of us kys othir of our comyn assent."
And all was do, and aftirward Beryn commaundit wyne.
They dronk; and then Geffrey seid, "Sir Beryne,
Yee mut declare your maters to myne intelligence,
That I may the bet perseyve all inconvenience,
Dout *pro* and *contra*, and ambiguité,
Thorough your declaracioune, and enformyd be;
And with the help of our soveren Lord celestiale,
They shall be behynd, and we shull have the ball.
For now the tyme aprochith, for their cursidnes
To be somwhat rewardit, and cause of yowr distres
Hath my hert y-setlid, and fixed them anye,
As trowith woll and reson, for their trechery.
For many a man, tofore this day, they have do out of daw,
Distroid, and turmentid, thorough their fals law.
For they think litill ellis, and all their wyttis fyve,

Save to have a mannys good, and to benym his lyve;
And hath a cursid custom, all ageyns reson,
That what man they enpeche, they have noon encheson,
Thoughe it be as fals a thing as God hymself is trewe;
And it touche a straunger, that is com of newe,
Atte first mocioune that he begynneth to meve,
Ther stondith up an hundrit hym to repreve.
The lawes of the ceté stont in probacy;
They usen noon enquestis the wrongis for to try;
And yf thow haddist eny wrong, and woldist pleyn the,
And were as trewe a cause as eny myght be,
Thow shuldist nat find o man to bere the witnes,
Though every man in the town knew it, more or les.
So burrith they togithir, and holdith with eche othir;
That as to counterplede them, though he wer my brother,
I wold gyve yow no counsaill, ne their empechement
In no word to deny, for that wer combirment.
For then wer they in the affirmatyf, and wold preve anoon;
And to yow that wer negatyff, the law wol graunt anoon.
So for to plede ageyn them it woll litill availl,
And yit to every mannys wit it ought be grete mervaile;
For their lawes been so streyt, and peynous ordinaunce
Is stallid for their falshede; for this is their fynaunce,
To lese their lyff for lesing, and Isope it may knowe,
That lord is riall of the town, and holdith them so lowe.
Wherfor they have a custom, a shrewid for the nonys;
Yf eny of them sey a thing, they cry all at onys,
And ferm it for a soth, and it bere any charge;
Thus of the danger of Isope they kepe them ever at large.
And therfor wisdom weer, whoso might eschewe,
Nevir to dele with them; for wer it wrong, or trewe,
It shuld litill availl ageyns their falshedes;
For they been acursid, and so been their dedes.

Wherfor we must, with all our wit sensibill,
Such answers us purvey, that they been insolibill;
To morowe at our aparaunce, I shall be responsaill,
For of wele and ellis it is thy day fynall."
"Now, soveren Lord celestiale," with many sorowful sighis,
Seyd Beryn to Geffray, "ymmemorat of lyes,
Graunt me grace to to morowe, so that God be plesid,
Make so myne answer; and I somwhat y-esid
By the, that art my counsaill, for othir help is noon."
"Reherce me then," quod Geffrey, "the causis of thy soon,
Fro poynt to poynt, al in fere, on the is surmysid,
Wherthorough I myght to morowe the betir be avisid."
"Now, in soth," quod Beryn, "thoughe I shuld dy,
I cannat tell the tenyth part of their trechery,
What for sorowe, and angir, that they to me have wrought;
So stond I clene desperat, but ye con help ought."
"Deperdeux!" seid Geffrey, "and I the woll nat faill,
Sith I have ensurid the to be of thy counsaill;
And so much the more, that thou art nat wise,
And canst nat me enform of no maner avise.
Here therfore a while, and tend wel to my lore;
The lord that dwellith in this town, whose name I told tofore,
Isope efft rehersid, is so inly wise,
That no man alyve can pas his devise;
And is so grow in yeris, that sixty yeer ago
He sawe nat for age: and yit it stondith so,
That thorough his wit, and wisdom, and his governaunce,
Who makith a fray of, or stryvith aught or mel to much or praunce,
Within the same ceté, that he nys take anoon,
And hath his pennaunce forthwith, for pardon usith he noon.
For ther nys pore, ne riche, ne what state he be,
That he nys undirsote for his iniquité;

And it be previd on hym, ther shall no gold hym quyte,
Right as the forfete axith, moch or lite;
For geyns his commaundment is noon so hardy quek,
So hard setith he his fote in every mannys nek.
For undir sky and sterris this day is noon alyve
That coud amend hym in o poynt, al thing to discryve.
The seven sages of Rome, though al ageyn hym were,
They shuld be insufficient to make his answere;
For he can all langagis, Greek, Hebrew, and Latyne,
Caldey, Frenssh, and Lombard, yee know well fyne,
And al maner that men in bokis write,
In poyse, and philosophie, also he can endite;
Cevile, and canoune, and al maner lawis;
Seneca, and Sydrak, and Salamonys sawys;
And the seven sciences, and eke law of armys,
Experimentis, and pompery, and al maner charmys;
As ye shul here aftir, er that I depart,
Of his imaginaciouns and of his sotill art.
For he is of age three hundrede yere and more;
Wherfor of all sciences he hath the more lore.
In Denmark he was gotten, and y-bore also,
And in Grece y-norished, tyl he coud spek and go;
Ther was he put to scole, and lernyd wondir fast;
For such was his grace that al othir he past.
But first in his begynnyng litil good he had,
But lernyd evir passyngly, and was wise and sad.
Of stature, and of feture, ther was noon hym like,
Thorough the lond of Grece, though men wold hym seke.
A kyng ther was in tho yeris that had noon heir male,

2661 *Seneca...Sydrak...Salamonys sawys.* These were popular books of science and wisdom in the middle ages. The book known by the name of Sydrac was a kind of romance of knowledge, apparently borrowed from the east, and pretending to derive its doctrines from Noah and the patriarchs.

Saff a doughter, that he lovid as his own saal:
Isope was his servaunt, and did hym such plesaunce
That he made hym his heir, and did hym so avaunce
To wed his doughter, and aftir hym to bere crowne;
Thorough prowes and his port so low he was and boun.
So as fortune wold, that was Isopis frend,
This worthy kyng that same yere made his carnel end.
That twenty-seven yere is passid that Isope thus hath reigned,
And yit was ther nevir for wrong on hym compleyned,
For no jugement that he gaff; yit som ageyn hym wylid
A grete part of his pepill, and wold have hym exiled;
But his grete wisdom, and his manfulnes,
His governaunce with his bounté, and his rightfulnes,
Had evir yit preserved hym unto this ilk day;
And woll whyle that he lyvith, for aught that men can say.
For who hath eny querel, or cause for to wonde,
Within this same cetê, quiklich woll he fond,
And it be sotill matir, to Isope for to fare,
Fro gynnyng to the end, his quarrell to declare.
And eve afore, as custom is, peple shal be on the morowe;
But whoso ly, he scapith nat wythout shame or sorowe.
Beryn, thow must go thithir, wher thyn enpechement
Shull be y-mevid; and therfor pas nat thens,
Tyll thou have herd them alle; and report them wele
To me, that am thy counsell, and repeir snele.
But so riall mancioune as Isope dwellith in,
Ther is noon in the world, ne so queynt of gyn;
Wherfore be well avisid, how I enform the
Of the wondir wayis, and of the pryvyté,
That been wythyn his paleyse, that thou must pas by.
And when thow approchist, and art the castell nygh,
Blench fro the brode gate, and enter thow nat there,
For ther been men to keep it; yit have thow no fere,
Pas down on the right hond by the castell walle,

Tyll thow fynd a wyndow; and what so the byfall,
Enter ther, yf thow may, and be nothyng agast,
But walk forth in that entré; then shalt thow see in haste
A portcolyse the tofore; pas in boldly,
Tyll thow com to an hall, the feyrest undir sky.
The wallis been of marbill y-joynid and y-closid;
And the pilours of crystall, grete and wele proposid;
The keveryng of bove is of selondyn;
And the pament beneth of gold and asure fyne.
But whoso passith thorough this hall hath nede to ren blyve,
Or els he myght be disware of his own lyve;
For ther wythin liith a stoon, that is so hote of kynd,
That what thing com for by, anoon it woll attend
As bryght as eny kandell leem, and consume anoon;
And so wold the hall also, ner coldnes of a stoon
That is y-clepid Dionyse, that set is hym ageyn.
So and thow lepe lightly, thow shalt have no peyn;
For ethir stone in kynd proportioned they be
Of hete, and eke of coldnes, of oon equalité.
Thow must pas thorough the hall, but tary nat I rede;
For thou shult fynd a dur up right afore thyn hede;
When thow art entrid ther, and the dore apast,
Whatso thow se ligg or stond, be thow nat agast;
And yf thow drede eny thing, do no more saff blowe,
But yit I rede the, beware that it be somwhat lowe.
Ther been to libardis, loos and untyed,
If that thy blowing of that othir in eny thing be spied,
Anoon he rakith on the to sese the by thy pate;
For ther nys thing in erth that he so much doith hate,
As breth of mannys mowith; wherfore refreyn the,
And blow but fair and soft, and when that nede be.
When thow art passid this hall, anoon then shalt thow com
Into the fayrest garden that is in christendom;
The wich thorough his clergy is made of such devise,

That a man shall ween he is in Paradise,
At his first comyng in, for melody and song,
And othir glorious thingis, and delectabill among;
The wich Tholomeus, that somtyme paynym was,
That of astronomy knew evry poynt and case,
Did it so devise, thorough his high connyng,
That ther nys best in erth, ne bird that doith sing,
That he nys there in figur, in gold, and sylvir fyne,
And mow, as they wer quyk, knaw the sotill engyne.
In mydward of this gardyn stant a feir tre,
Of al maner levis that undir sky be,
Y-forgit, and y-fourmit, eche in his degré,
Of sylvir, and of gold fyne, that lusty been to see.
This gardeyn is evir grene, and full of May flowris,
Of rede, white, and blew, and othir fresh colouris;
The wich been so redolent, and sentyn so about,
That he must be right lewde therin shuld route.
These monstrefull thingis I devise to the;
Because thow shuldist nat of them abashid be.
When that thow comyst there, so thow be strong in thought,
And do be my counsell, drede the right nought;
For ther beth viii. tregetours that this gardyn kepith;
Four of them doith waak, whils the four slepith;
The wich been so perfite of nygramancé,
And of the art of apparence, and of tregetric,
That they make semen as to a mannys sight
Abominiball wormys, that sore ought be afright
The hertiest man on erth, but he warnyd were
Of the grisly sightis that he shald see there.
Among all othir there is a lyon white,
That, and he be a straungir, he rampith for to bite,
And hath tofore this tyme five hundred men and mo
Devourid, and y-ete, that thereforth have y-go;
Yit shalt thow pas suyrly, so thow do as I tell.

The tre I told tofore, that round as eny bell
Berith bow, and braunce, traylyng to the ground;
And thow touch oon of them, thow art saff and sound
The tre hath such vertu, there shall nothing the dere.
Loke that be the first when thou comyst there.
Then shalt thow se an entré, by the ferther side;
Thoughe it be streyte tofore, inner large and wyde
It growith more and more, and as a dentour wryith;
Yit woll that wey the bryng there that Isope liith,
Into the feyrist chambir that evir man saw with eye.
When thou art there wythin, govern the wisely;
For there shalt thow here al thyn enpechement,
Opynly declarid, in Isopis present.
Report them wele, and kepe them in thy mynd;
And aftir thy relacioune, we shall so turn and wend,
Thorough help of God above, such help for to make,
That they shull be acombrit, and we right well to scape."
"Now in soth," quoth Beryn, "a mannys hert may grise
Of such wondir weyis; for al my marchandise
I had levir lese, then oppon me take
Such a wey to pass." "Then, sir, for your sake
I woll myself," quoth Geffrey; "sith I am ensuryd
To help the with my power, thow shalt be amyrid,
As ferforth as I may, that I wol do my peyn
To bryng yow plesaunt tyding, and retourn ageyn,
Yit or the cok crow; and therfor let me se,
Whils I am out, how mery ye can be."
Geffrey toke his leve; but who was sory tho,
But Beryn, and his company? for when he was go,
Thei had no maner joy, but dout, and hevynes;
For of his repeyryng thei had no sikernes.
So every man to othir made his compleynt;
And wished that of felony they had been atteynt,
And so them thought betir to end hevynes,

Then every day to lak brede atte first mes :
" For when our good is go, what shall fal of us ?
Evir to be their thrallis, and peraventure wers ;
To lese our lyf aftir, yf we displese them ought."
Aftir Geffrey went, this was all their thought,
Throughout the nyght, tyl cokkis gan to sing ;
But then encresid anguishe, ther hondis gan to wryng,
And cursid wynd and watir that them brought ther,
And wishid many times that he had been in bere ;
And were apassid and entrid into dispeyr,
In as much as Geffrey did nat repeir.
Eche man seyd to othir it myght nat be y-nayid,
But Geffray had uttirlich falsly them betrayid.
. . . . . .
Thoroughout all the long nyght ;
Tho went they to counsell, a litill tofore the day,
And were all acordit for to sayl awey ;
And so them thought betir, and leve their good ther,
Then abyde theroppon, and have more fere.
Then made their takelyng redy, and wend the saill acros,
For to save their lyvis and set nat of their los,
So sore they were adred to be in servitute ;
And hopid God above wold send them som refute,
By som othir costis ther wynd them wold bryng.
And therwithal cam Geffrey, on his stilt lepeing,
And cried wondir fast by the watir syde.
When Beryn herd Geffrey, he bids his men abyde,
And to launch out a bote, and bryng Geffrey in ;
" For he may more avayl me now, then al my kyn,
And he be trew and trusty, as myn hope is."
But yit therof had Beryn no ful sikernes.
These Rom fet in Geffrey with an hevy chere ;
For they had levir saill forth, then put them in weer

Both lyve and goodis ; and evill suspicioune
They had of this Geffrey ; wherfore they gon roune,
Talkyng to eche othir, " this man woll us betray."
Geffrey wist well i-nowghe, he was nat to their pay ;
And for verry angir he threw into the see
Both stilt and eke his crouch, that made wer of tre ;
And gan them to comfort, and seid in this manere :
" *Benedicite*, Beryn ; why make ye such chere ?
For and yee wex hevy, what shall yowr men do,
But take ensampill of yow ? and have no cause too.
For yit or it be eve, yowr adversaryes all
I shall make them spurn and have a sore fall,
And yee go quyte, and all yowr good, and have of theirs too ;
And they to be right feign for to scape so,
Wythout more daungir, and yowr wyl be.
For of the lawys her such is the equyté,
That who pursu othir, and his pleynt be wrong,
He shall make amendis, be he nevir so strong ;
Right as shuld the tothir, yf he condempned were,
Right so shall the pleyntiff, right as I yow lere.
And that shall preve by them, have ye no doute,
Yit or it be eve, right low to yow to loute,
And submit them to yow, and put them in yowr grace,
By that tyme I have y-made all my wanlase ;
And in hope to spede well, let shape us for to dyne."
Geffrey axid watir, and sith brede, and wyne ;
And seid " It is holsom to breke our fast betyme ;
For the steward woll to the court at hour of pryme."
The sonne gan to shyne and shope a feir dey ;
But for aught that Geffrey could do or sey,
These Romeyns spekyn fast, all the dyner while,
That Geffrey with his sotill wordis wold them begile.
So when they had y-dyned, they rysen up echoone,

And drew them to counsell, what was best to doon.
Som seyd, " the best rede that we do may,
To throw Geffrey ovir the board, and seyll forth our way."
But for drede of Beryn, som wold nat so ;
Yit the more party assentid wele thereto.
Geffrey, and Beryn, and worthy Romeyns tweyn,
Stood a part within the ship, and Geffrey gan to seyn,
" Beryn, beth avised, your men beth in distaunce ;
Sith ye been her soveren, put them in governaunce;
For methinkith they holdith contrary opynoune,
And grace faylith comynlich wher is divisioune."
In the meen whyle that they gan thus to stryve,
Hanybald was up, and y-com as blyve
To the brigg of the town, ther the shippis rood,
And herd much noyse, but litil while he bood ;
For when he saw the saylis stond all acros,
" Alas !" quod this Hanybald, " here growith a smert los
To me, that am provost ; and have in charge and hest
All these fyve shippis undir myn arest ;"
And ran into the town, and made an hidouse cry,
And chargit all the cetezins to armys for to hy,
From o strete tyl anothir, and rerid up al the town,
And made the trompis blowe up, and all the bellis soun,
And seyd that the Romeyns were in poynt to pas ;
Tyl ther wer a thowsand, rathir mo than les,
Men y-armyd cleen, walkyng to the stronde.
When Beryn them aspied, " Now, Geffrey, in thy honde
Stont lyf and goodis, doth with us what the list ;
For all our hope is on the, comfort, help, and trist.
For we must bide aventure, such as God woll shape ;
For now I am in certen we mow in no wise scape."
" Have no dout," quoth Geffrey, " beth mery, let me aloon ;
Getith a peir sisours, sherith my berd anoon ;

And aftirwerd lete top my hede hastylich and blyve."
Som went to with sesours, som wyth a knyffe;
So what for sorowe, and hast, and for lewd tole,
Ther was no man alyve bet like to a fole
Then Geffrey was. By that tyme they had al y-do,
Hanybald clepid out Beryn, to mote-hall for to go;
And stode upon the brigg, with an huge route.
Geffrey was the first to Hanybald gan to loute,
And lokid out afore ship; "God bless yow, sir," quoth he;
"Wher art thow now, Beryn? com forth, behold, and se,
Her is an huge pepill y-rayd and y-dight;
All these been my children, that been in armys bryght;
Yistirdey I gat them; is nat mervaill
That they been hither y-com, to be of our counsaill,
And to stond by us, and help us in our ple.
A! myne own childryn, blessid mut ye be!"
Quoth Geffrey, with an high voise, and had a nyce visage,
And gan to daunce with joy, in the fore stage.
Hanybald loked on Geffrey, as he were amasid,
And beheld his countenaunce, and how he was y-rasid;
But evirmore he thought that he was a fole
Naturelle of kynd, and had noon othir tool,
As semid by his wordis and his visage both;
And thought it had been foly to wex with hym wroth;
And gan to bord ageyn, and axid hym in game,
"Sith thou art our fathir, who is then our dame?
And how, and in what plase, were we begete?"
"Yistirday," quoth Geffrey, "pleyng in the strete,
At a gentil game, the clepid is the quek,
A long peny halter was cast about my nek;
And y-knet fast with a riding knot,
And cast ovir a perch, and hale along my throte."
"Was that a game," quoth Hanybald, "for to hang thyselve?"

"So they seyd about me, a thousand eche by hymself."
"How scapiddist thow," quoth Hanybald, "that thou wer nat dede?"
"Therto can I answer without any rede;
I bare thre dise in myn own purs;
For I go nevir without fare, i-betir or wers;
I kist them forth all thre, and too fill amys-ase.
But here now what fil aftir, right a mervelouse case;
Ther cam a mowse lepe forth, and ete the third boon,
That puffid out her skyn, as grete as she myght goon;
And in this maner wise, of the mowse and me,
All ye be y-com my children, fair and fre.
And yit or it be eve, fall woll such a chaunce,
To stond in my power yow all to avaunce;
For and we plede well to day, we shull be riche i-nowghe."
Hanybald of his wordis hertlich loughe;
And so did all that herd hym, as they myght wele;
And had grete joy wyth hym for to tell.
For they knew hym noon othir but a fole of kynd;
And all this was his discrecioune, and that previd the end.
Thus whils Geffrey japid, to make their hertis light,
Beryn and his company were rayid and y-dight,
And londit them in botis, ferefull how to spede;
For all their thoughtis in balance stode, betwene hope and dreed.
But yit they did their peyn to make lightsome chere,
As Geffrey them had enfourmed, of port and all manere
Of their governaunce, all the long day,
Tyll their plee wer endit; so went they forth their wey,
To the court with Hanybald; then Beryn gan to sey,
"What nedith this, sir Hanybald, to make such aray!
Sith we been pese-marchantis, and use no spoilacioune."
"For soth, sir," quod Hanybald, "to me was made relacioune

Yee wer in poynt to void ; and yef yee had do so,
Yee had lost yowr lyvis without wordis mo."
Beryn held hym styll. Geffrey spak anoon,
" No les wed then lyvis ? why so, good sir Jon ?
That wer somwhat to much, as it semeth me.
But ye be ovirwise that dwell in this ceté ;
For ye have begonne a thing makith you right bold ;
And yit or it be eve, as folis shull yee be hold.
And eke yee devyne for shipmannys craft,
And wotith litill what longith to afore the ship and bafft ;
And namelich in the dawnyng when shipmen first arise."
" My good frend," quoth Hanybald, in a scornyng wise,
" Yee must onys enfourm me thorough yowr discrecioune ;
But first ye must answer to a questioune ?
Why make men cros-saill in myddis of the mast ?"
" For to talow the ship and fech more blast."
" Why goon the yemen to bote ankirs to hale ?"
" For to make them redy to walk to the ale."
" Why hale they up stonys by the crane lyne ?"
" To make the tempest sese and the sonne shyne."
" Why close they the port with the see-bord ?"
" For the mastir shuld awake at first word."
" Thow art a redy reve," quoth Hanybald, " in fay."
" Yee, sir, trewly, for sothe is that yow sey."
Geffrey evir clappid, as doith a watir myll,
And made Hanybald to laugh al his hert fyll.
" Beryn," quoth this Geffrey, " retourn thy men ageyn ;
What shull they do with the at court ? no man on them pleyn.
Plede thy case thyselve, right as thow hast y-wrought,
To bide with the shippis my purpose is and thought."
" Nay, forsoth," quod Hanybald, " thow shalt abyde on lond ;
We have no folis but the ;" and toke hym by the hond ;

"For thow art wise in law to plede all the case."
"That can I betir," quoth Geffrey, "than eny man in this plase.
What seyst thow therto, Beryn? shall I tell thy tale?"
Hanybald likid his wordis wele, and for-ward gan hym hale.
Beryn made hym angry, and sighid wondir sore;
For Geffrey hym had enfourmid of every poynt tofore,
How he hym shuld govern all the long day.
Geffrey chasid hym ageyn, "Sey me ye or nay,
Maystowe nat here speke some maner word?"
"Leve thy blab, lewd fole, me likith nat thy bord! 3020
I have anothir thought," quoth Beryn, "wherof thow carist lite."
"Clepeist thow me a fole?" quoth Geffrey, "al that I may the wite.
But first when we out of Rome saillid both in fere,
Tho I was thy felawe and thy partinere;
For tho the marchandise was more than half myne;
And sith that thow com hither thow takist all for thyne.
But yit or it be eve, I wol make oon behest;
But thow have my help, thy part shall be lest."
"Thyn help," quoth Beryn; "lewde fole, thow art more than masid!
Dres the to the shippis-ward with thy crown y-rasid; 3030
For I myght nevir spare the bet, trus and be agoo!"
"I wol go with the," quoth Geffrey, "wher thow wolt or no,
And lern to plede law, to wyn both howse and lond."
"So thow shalt," quoth Hanybald, and led hym by the hond,
And leyd his hond oppon his neck; but and he had y-know
Whom he had led, in sikernes he had well levir in snow
Have walkid forty myle, and rathir then fail more;
For he wishid that Geffrey had y-be unbore
Full oft tyme in that day, or the ple wer do;

And so did all that wrought Beryn sham and woo.
Now yee that list abide and here of sotilté,
Mowe know how that Beryn sped in his ple;
And in what aray to the court he went;
And how Hanybald led Geffrey, disware of his entent.
But yet he axid of Geffrey, "What is thy name, I pray?"
"Gylhochet," quoth Geffrey, "men clepid me yistirday".
"And wher weer thow y-bore?" "I note, I make avow;"
Seyd Geffrey to this Hanybald, "I axe that of yow;
For I can tell no more, but here I stond nowe."
Hanybald of his wordis hertlich lowghe,
And held hym for a passyng fole to serve eny lord.
Thus they romyd janglyng into the court-ward;
But or they com ther, the steward was y-set,
And the grettist of the town a company y-met,
And gon to stryve fast, who shuld have the good
That com was with Beryn ovir the salt flood.
Som seyd oon, and som seyde anothir;
Som wold have the shippis, the parell, and the rothir;
Som his eyen, som his lyf wold have, and no les,
Or els he shuld for them fyne, or he did pas.
And in the mene whils they wer in this afray,
Beryn and these Romeyns wer com, in good aray
As myght be made of woll and of colour graynyd;
They toke a syde bench that for them was ordeynyd.
When all was husht and still, Beryn arose anoon,
And stode in the myddis of the hall tofore them everichone;
And seyd, "Sir steward, in me shall be no let;
I am y-com to answer, as my day is set;
Do me ryght and reson, I axe yow no more."
"So shall I," quoth the steward, "for therto I am swore."
"He shall have right," quoth Geffrey, "wher thow wolt or no.
or and thow mys onys thy jugement ondo;

I woll to the emperour of Rome my cosyn ;
For of o cup he and I full oft have dronk the wyne ;
And yit we shull heraftir, as oft as we mete,
For he is long the gladder, when I send hym to grete."
This Geffrey stode upon a fourm, for he wold be sey
Above all othir the shouldris and the cry ;
And starid all about, with his lewd berd,
And was y-holde a very fole of ech man hym herd.
The steward, and the officers, and the burgeysis all,
Laughid at hym hertlich ; the criour gan to call
The burgeyse that had pleyd with Beryn at ches,
And he arose quiklich, and gan hym for to dres
Afore the steward at barr, as the maner is ;
He gan to tell his tale wyth grete redines ;
" Here me, sir steward, this day is me set,
To have right and reson, I axe yow no bet,
Of Beryn, that here stondith ; that with me yistirday
Made a certain covenaunt, and at ches we did pley,
That whoso were y-matid of us both too,
Shuld do the tothirs bidding ; and yf he wold nat so,
He must drink all the watir that salt wer in the se.
Thus I to hym surid, and he also to me.
To preve my tale trew, I am nat all aloon."
Up rose ten burgeysis quyklich anoon,
And affermyd eviry word of his tale soth ;
And made them all redy for to do their othe.
Evander the steward, " Beryn, now," quoth he,
" Thow most answere nede ; it woll noon othir be ;
Take thy counsell to the : spede on, I have doon."
Beryn held hym styll ; Geffrey spak anoon ;
" Now, be my trowith," quod Geffrey, " I marvel much of yow
To bid us go to counsell, and knowith me wise i-nowghe,

And evir full avisid, in twynkelyng of an eye,
To make a short answer, but yf my mowith be dry.
Shuld we go to counsell for o word or tweyn ?
Be my trowith we nyll, let se mo that pleyn.
And but he be y-answerd, and that right anoon,
I geve yow leve to rise and walk out everychoon,
And aspy redily yf ye fynd me there,
In the meen whils I woll abyde here ;
Nay, I tell trewly, I am wiser then ye ween ;
For ther nys noon of you woot redely what I meen."
Every man gan laughe all his hert fill
Of Geffrey and his wordis ; but Beryn held hym still
And was cleen astonyd ; but yit ner the lattir,
He held it nat al foly that Geffrey did clattir,
But wisely hym governyd, as Geffrey hym taught ;
For percell of his wisdom he had tofore smaught.
" Sir steward," quoth Beryn, " I ondirstond wele
The tale of this burgeyse ; now let anothir tell,
That I may take counsell, and answer all at onys."
" I graunt," quod the steward, " thin axing for the nonys,
Sith thow wolt be rewlid by the folis rede ;
For he is right a wise man to help the in thy nede."
Up aros the accusours queyntlich anoon ;
Hanybald was the first of them everichoon,
And gan to tell his tale with a proud chere ;
" Yistirday, soverens, when I was here,
Beryn and thes burgeyse gon to plede fast
For pleying at ches, so ferforth at last,
Thorough vertu of myn office, that I had in charge
Beryns fyve shippis, for to go at large,
And to be in answer her this same day ;
So walkyng to the strond-ward we borgeynyd by the wey,
That I shuld have the marchandise that Beryn with hym
brought,

Wherof I am sesid, as ful sold and bought,
In covenaunte that I shuld his shippis fill ageyn
Of my marchandise, such as he tofore had seyn
In my own plase, howsis to or thre,
Full of marchandise as they myght be;
And I am evir redy, whensoever he woll,
Let hym go, or sende, and charge his shippis full
Of such marchandise as he findith there;
For in such wordis we accordit were."
Up rose ten burgeysis, not tho that rose tofore,
But othir, and made them redy to have swore,
That every word of Hanybald, from the begynnyng to the end,
Was soth and eke trewe; and with their mende
Full prest they wer to preve, and seyd they wer present
At covenaunt making, by God omnipotent.
"It shall nat nede," quoth Geffrey, "whils that I here stond;
For I woll preve it myself with my right honde.
For I have been in four batellis heretofore,
And this shall be the fift; and therfor I am swore.
Beholdith, and seith," and turnyd hym about.
The steward and the burgeyse gamyd all about;
The Romeyns held them still and lawhghid but a lite.
Wyth that cam the blynd man his tale to endite,
That God hym grant wynnyng, right as he hath aservid.
Beryn and his company stood all astryvyd
Betwene hope and drede, right in high distres;
For of wele or of woo they had no sikernes.
"Beryn," quoth this blynd, "thoughe I may nat see,
Stond nere yit the barr, my comyng is for the,
That wrongfullich thow witholdist my both to eyen,
The wich I toke the for a tyme; and quyklich to me hiien.
And take them me ageyn, as our covenaunt was.

Beryn, I take no reward of othir mennys case,
But oonlich of myn oon ; that stont me most an hond.
Now blessid be God in heven, that brought the to this lond ;
For sith our last parting, many bitir teris
Have I lete for thy love, that som tyme partineris
Of wynnyng and of lesing were yeris fele ;
And evir I fond the trewe ; tyl at the last thow didst stele
Awey with my too eyen, that I toke to the,
To se the tregetours pley and their sotilté,
As yistirday, here in this same plase,
Tofore yow, sir steward, rehersid as it was.
Full trew is that byword, a man to servesabill
Ledith oft bayard from his own stabill.
Beryn, by the I meen, though thow make it straunge ;
For thow knowist trewly that I made no chaunge
Of my good eyen for thyn that bladder were."
Therwith stode up burgeyse four, witnes to bere.
Beryn held hym styll, and Geffrey spak anoon ;
" Now of thy lewd compleynt, and thy masid moon,
By my trowith," quod Geffrey, " I have grete mervaill.
For though thow haddist eyen-sight, it shuld litill availe;
Thow shuldist never fare the bet, but the wors in fay ;
For al thing may be still now for the in house and way.
And yf thow haddist thyn eyen, thou woldist no counsell hele ;
I know wele by thy fisnamy, thy kynd wer to stele.
And eke it is thy profite, and thyn ese also,
To be blynd as thow art ; for now wherso thow go,
Thow hast thy lyvlode, whils thow art alyve ;
And yf thow myghtist se, thow shuldist nevir thryve."
All the house throughout, save Beryn and his feris,
Lawghid of Geffrey, that watir on their leris
Ran down from their eyen for his masid wit.
Wyth that cam the woman, hir tung was nat sclyt,

Wyth fifteen burgeysis, and women also fele,
Her quarel for to preve, and Beryn to adele,
With a feir knave child y-loke wythin their armys ;
And gan to tel hir tale of wrongis, and of harmys,
And eke of unkyndnes, untrowith, and falshede,
That Beryn had y-wrought to hir ; that queyntlich from hir gede
Anoon oppon her wedding, when he his wyll had doon,
And brought hir wyth chyld, and lete hir sit aloon
Wythout help and comfort from that day ; " and nowith
He proferid me nat to kys onys with his mowith ;
As yistirday, sir steward, afore yow eche word
Was rehersid here, my pleynt is of record ;
And this dey is me set for to have reson—
Let hym make amendis, or tell encheson
Why hym ought nat fynd, as man ought his wyf."
These fiftene burgeysis quyklich al so blyve,
And as fele wymen as stode by hir ther,
Seyd that tney were present when they weddit were ;
And that every word that the woman seyde
Was trew, and eke Beryn had hir so betrayd.
" *Benedicite*," quoth Geffrey, " Beryn hast thow a wyf ?
Now have God my trowith, the days of my lyf
I shall trust the the les, thow toldist me nat tofore
As wele of thy wedding and of thy son y-bore.
Go to and kys them both, thy wyf and eke thyn heir ;
Be thow nat ashamyed, for they both be feyr.
This wedding was right privy, but I shall make it couthe.
Behold thy sone, it semith crope out of thy mowith ;
And eke of thy condicioune both soft and some.
Now am I glad thyn heir shall with us to Rome ;
And I shall teche hym, as I can, whils that he is young,
Every day by the strete to gathir houndis dung,

Tyll it be abill of prentyse to craft of taverner taury ;
And aftir I shall teche hym for to cache a fly,
And to mend mytens, when they been to-tore,
And aftir to cloute shoun, when he is elder more ;
Yit for his parentyne, to pipe, as doith a mowse,
I woll hym teche, and for to pike a snayl out of his howse,
And to berk, as doith an hound, and sey baw baw ;
And turn round about, as a cat doith wyth a straw ;
And to blete as doith a shepe, and ney as doith an hors,
And to low as deith a cow ; and as myn own corps
I woll cherish hym every day, for his mothirs sake."
And gan to stappe ner the child, to have y-take,
As semed by his countenaunce, although he thought nat so.
But mothir was evir ware, and blenchid to and fro,
And leyd hir hond betwene, and lokid somwhat wroth ;
And Geffrey in pur wrath beshrewid them all both.
" For, by my trowith," quoth Geffrey, " wel masid is thy pan,
For I woll teche thy sone the craftis that I can,
That he in tyme to come myght win his lyvlode ;
To wex therfor angry thow art verry wood.
Of husbond, wyf, and sone, by the Trynyté,
I note which is the wisest of them all thre."
" No sothly," quoth the steward, " it liith all in thy noll,
Both wit and wysdom, and previth by thy poll."
For all be that Geffrey word it sotilly,
The steward and the burgeysis held it for foly,
All that evir he seyd, and toke it for good game,
And had full litill knowlech he was Geffrey the lame.
Beryn and his company stode still as stone,
Betwene hope and drede, disware how it shuld goon ;
Saff Beryn trist in party that Geffrey wold hym help,
But yit into that hour he had no cause to yelp.
Wherfor they made much sorowe, that dole was and peté.

Geffrey herd hym sigh sore; "What devil is yow?" quod he,
"What nede yow be sory, whils I stond here?
Have I nat enfourmid yow how, and in what manere,
That I yow wold help, and bryng them in the snare?
Yf ye coud plede as well as I, full litill wold ye care.
Pluk up thy hert," quoth Geffrey, "Beryn, I speke to the."
"Leve thy blab lewd," quoth Beryn to him age,
"It doith no thing availl, that sorowe com on thy hede;
It is nat worth a fly al that thow hast seyde.
Have we nat els now for to think oppon,
Saff here to jangill?" Machyn rose anoon,
And went to the barr, and gan to tell his tale;
He was as fals as Judas, that set Criste at sale.
"Sir steward," quoth this Machyn, "and the burgeysis all,
Knowith wele how Melan with purpill and with pall,
And othir marchandise, seven yere ago,
Went to-ward Rome, and how that I also
Have enquered sith, as reson woll and kynde,
Sith he was my fathir, to know of his ende.
For yit sith his departing, tyl it was yistirday,
Met I nevir creature that me coud wissh or say
Reedynes of my fathir dede othir alyve;
But blessid be God in heven, in this thevis sclyve
The knyff I gaff my fathir was yistirday y-found;
Sith I hym apele, let hym be fast y-bound.
The knyf I know wele i-nowe; also the man stont here,
And dwellith in this town, and is a cotelere,
That made the same knyf wyth his too hondis;
That wele I woot there is noon like to sech al cristen londis;
For three preciouse stonys been wythin the haft
Perfitlich y-couchit, and sotillich by craft
Endendit in the haft, and that right coriously;

A saphir, and a salidone, and a rich ruby.
The cotelere cam lepeing forth with a bold chere;
And seyd to the steward, "that Machyn told now here,
Every word is trew; so beth the stonys set,
I made the knyf my self, who myght know it bet;
And toke the knyff to Machyn, and he me payd wele,
So is this felon gilty; there is no more to tell."
Up arose burgeysis by two, by thre, by four,
And seyd they wer present, the same tyme and hour,
When Machyn wept sore, and brought his fathirs gownd,
And gaf hym the same knyff oppon the see strond.
"Beth ther eny mo pleyntifs of record?"
Quod Geffrey to the steward, and he ageyn-ward,
"How semeth the, Gylhochet, beth ther nat i-nowghe?
Make thyn answer, Beryn, case that thow mowe;
For oon or othir thow must sey, although it nat availe;
And but thow lese or thow go, methinkith grete mervaill."
Beryn goith to counsell, and his company;
And Geffrey bode behinde to her more and se,
And to shew the burgeyse somwhat of his hert,
And seyd, "But I make the pleyntifs for to smert,
And alle that them meyntenith for aught that is y-seyd,
I woll grant yow to kut the eris fro my hede.
My master is at counsell, but counsell hath he noon;
For but I hym help, he is cleen undoon.
But I woll help hym al that I can, and meyntene hym also
By my power and connyng, so I am bound therto.
For I durst wage battell with yow, though yee be strong,
That my maister is in the trowith, and ye be in the wrong;
For, and we have lawe, I ne hold yow but distroied
In yowr own falshede, so be yee now aspied.
Wherfor yit or eve I shal abate yowr pride,
That som of yow shall be right feyn to slink away and hide."

The burgeyses gon to lawgh, and scornyd hym therto.
"Gylhochet," quod Evander, "and thow cowdist so
Bryng it thus about, it were a redy wey."
"He is a good fool," quod Hanybald, "in fay,
To put hymself aloon in strengith, and eke in wit,
Ageyns all the burgeysis that on this bench sit."
"What clatir is this," quod Machyn, "al day with a fole?
Tyme is now to worch with som othir tole.
For I am certeyn of their answer that they wol fail;
And lyf for lyf of my fathir, what may that avail?
Wherfor beth avisid, for I am in no doute,
The goodis been sufficient to part al aboute;
So may every party pleyntif have his part."
"That is reson," quod the blind, "a trew man thow art;
And eke it were untrowith, and eke grete syn,
But eche of us that pleynith myght somwhat wyn."
Hanybald bote his lippis, and herd them both wele;
"Towchyng the marchandise o tale I shall yow tell,
And eke make avow, and hold my behest,
That of the marchandise yowr part shall be lest;
For I have made a bargeyn, that may nat be undo,
I woll hold his covenaunt, and he shal myn also."
Up roos quyklich the burgeyse Syrophanes;
"Hanybald," quod he, "the law goith by no lanys,
But hold ferth the streyt wey, even as doith a lyne;
For yistirday, when Beryn with me did dyne,
I was the first person that put hym in arest;
And for he wold go large, thow haddist in charge and hest
To sese both ship and goodis, til I were answerid;
Then must I first be servid, this knowith al men y-lerid."
The woman stode besidis, and cried wondir fast,
"Ful soth is that byword, to pot who comyth last,
He worst is servid, and so it farith by me;

Yit nethirles, sir steward, I trust to your leuté,
That knowith best my cause, and my trew entent;
I axe yow no more but rightful jugement.
Let me have part with othir, sith he my husbond is:
Good sir, beth avisid, I axe yow nat amys."
Thus they gon to stryve, and wer of high mode,
For to depart emong them othir mennys good,
Wher they tofore had nevir properté,
Ne nevir shuld thereaftir by doom of equyté;
But they had othir cause then they had tho.
  Beryn was at counsell, his hert was full woo,
And his meyny sory, distrakt, and al amayide;
For tho they levid noon othir, but Geffrey had betrayide,
Because he was so long, they coud no maner rede;
But everich by hymself wishid he had be dede.
"O myghtful God," they seyd, "I trow tofore this day,
Was nevir gretter treson, fere, ne affray,
Y-wrought onto mankind, then now is to us here;
And namelich by this Geffrey, with his sotil chere.
So feithful he made it he wold us help echone,
And now we be y-myryd, he letith us sit aloon."
"Of Geffrey," quod Beryn, "be as it be may:
We mut answer nede, ther is noon othir way;
And therfor let me know your wit, and your counsaile."
They wept, and wrong their hondis, and gan to waille
The tyme that they wer bore, and shortly of the lyve
They wishid that they wer; with that came Geffrey blive,
Passing them towards, and be-gan to smyle.
Beryn axid Geffrey wher he had be al the while;
"Have mercy oppon us, and help us as thow hight."
"I wol help yow right wele, through grace of Goddis might;
And I can tell yow tiding of their governaunce.
They stond in altercatioune and stryf in poynt to praunce,

To depart your goodis ; and levith verrily
That it wer impossibill you to remedy.
But their high pride and their presumpcioune
Shal be, yit or eve, their confusioune ;
And to make amendis ech man for his pleynt,
Let se therfor your good avise, how they might be ateynt."
The Romeyns stode still, as who had shor their hede.
" In feith," quod Beryn, " we can no maner rede,
But in God, and yow, we submit us all,
Body, lyf, and goodis, to stond or to fall ;
And nevir for to travers o word that thow seyst ;
Help us, good Geffrey, as wele as thou mayst."
" Deperdeux," quod Geffrey, " and I woll do me peyn
To help yow as my connyng woll strech and ateyn."
The Romeyns went to barr, and Geffrey al-tofore
With a nice countenaunce, barefote, and to-tore,
Pleying with a yerd he bare in his honde,
And was evir wistlyng at every pase comaunde.
The steward and the burgeysis had game i-nowghe
Of Geffreyis nice comyng, and hertlich lowghe ;
And eche man seyd, " Gylhochet, com nere ;
Thow art right welcome, for thow makist us chere."
" The same welcom," quod Geffrey, " that yee woll us,
Fall oppon yowr hedis, I prey to God, and wers !"
They held hym for a verry fole, but he held them wel more:
And so he made them in breff tyme, although they wer nat shore.
" Styntith now," quod Geffrey, " and let make pese,
Of myrthis, and of japis, tyme is now to cese,
And speke of othir matir that we have to doon ;
For and we hew amys eny maner stone,
We know wele in certeyn what pardon we shul have ;
The more is our nede us to defend and save.

My master hath be at counsell, and ful avisid is
That I shall have the wordis, speke I wele or mys;
Wherfor, sir steward, and ye burgeysis all,
Sittith up right, and writith nat, for aventuris that may fall.
For and ye deme untrewly, or do us eny wrong,
Ye shull be refourmyd, be ye nevir so strong,
Of every poynt and injury, and that in grete haste;
For he is nat unknowe to us that may yow chaste.
Hold forth the right wey, and by no side lanys.
And as towchyng the first pleyntif, Syrophanes,
That pleyd with my master yistirday at ches,
And made a certeyn covenaunte, who that had the wers
In the last game, althoughe I wer nat there,
Shuld do the tothirs bidding, whatsoevir it wer,
Or drynk all the watir that salt wer in the see;
Thus I trowe, sir steward, ye woll record the ple.
And yf I have y-missid, in lettir or in word,
The law wol I be rewlid aftir yowr record;
For we be ful avisid in this wise to answere."
Evander, the steward, and al men that wer there,
Had mervil much of Geffrey, that spak so redely,
Whose wordis tofore semyd al foly;
And wer astonyd cleen, and gan for to drede,
And evry man tyl othir lenyd with his hede,
And seyd, he reported the tale right formally,
He was no fole in certen, but wise, ware, and soly;
"For he hath but y-japid us and scornyd heretofore;
And we have hold hym a fole, but we be wel more."
Thus they stodied on Geffrey, and laughid tho right naught.
When Geffrey had aspied they wer in such thought,
And their hertis trobelid, pensyf, and anoyed,
Hym lyst to dryve in bet the nayl, till they wer fully cloyid.
"Soveren sirs," he seyd, "sith that it so is,

That in reporting of our ple ye fynd nothing amys,
As provith wele yowr scilence, eke ye withseyth nat
O word of our tale, but clene without spot;
Then to our answer I prey yow take hede;
For we wol sey al the trowith, right as it is in dede.
For this is soth and certen, it may nat be withseyd,
That Beryn that here stondith was thus ovirpleid
In the last game, when wagir was opon;
But that was his sufferaunce, as ye shull here anoon.
For in all this ceté ther nys no maner man
Can pley betir at ches, then my mastir can;
Ne bet then I, though I it sey, can nat half so much.
Now how he lost it by his wyll, the cause I woll toche;
For ye wend and ween that ye had hym engyned,
But ye shul fele in every veyn that ye be undirmined,
And y-brought at ground, and eke ovirmusid.
And agenst the first that Beryn is acusid
Herith now ententyflich: when we wer on the see,
Such a tempest on us fill, that noon myght othir se,
Of thundir, wynd, and lightenyng, and stormys ther among;
Fiftene dayis during the tempest was so strong,
That eche man til othir began hym for to shryve;
And made their avowis, yf they myght have the lyve,
Som to se the sepulkir, and som to othir plase,
To sech holy seyntis for help and for grace;
Som to fast and do pennaunce, and som do almysdede;
Tyl at last, as God wold, a voise to us seyd,
In our most turment and desperat of mynd,
That yf we wold be savid, my maister must hym bynd
Be feith, and eke be vow, when we cam to lond,
To drink al the salt watir within the see strond,
Without drinking eny sope of the fressh watir;
And taught hym al the sotilté, how, and in what manere,

That he shuld wirch by engyne, and by a sotill charm,
To drink all the salt watir, and have hymself no harm ;
But stop the fresh rivers by every cost side,
That they entir nat in the se thorough the world wyde.
The voise we herd, but naught we saw, so wer our witts ravid ;
For this was end fynally, yf we lust be savid.
Wherfor my master, Beryn, when he cam to this port,
To his avow and promys he made his first resort,
Or that he wold bergeyn eny marchandise.
And right doith these marchandis in the same wise,
That maken their avowis in saving of their lyvis ;
They completyn their pilgremagis or they se their wyvis.
So mowe ye ondirstond, that my master, Beryn,
Of fre will was y-matid, as he that was a pilgrym,
And myght nat perfourm by many thowsand part
His avow and his hest, wythout right sotil art,
Without help and strengith of many mennys myght.
Sir steward, and sir burgeyse, if we shul have right,
Sirophanes must do cost and aventure,
To stop al the fresh ryvers into the see that entir.
For Beryn is redy in al thing hym to quyte,
So he be in defaute must pay for the wite.
Sith ye been wise al, what nede is much clatir ?
Ther was no covenaunte them betwene to drink fresh watir."
When Sirophanes had y-herd al Geffreyis tale,
He stode al abashid, with colour wan and pale,
And lokid oppon the steward with a rewful chere,
And on othir frendship and neyghbours he had there,
And preyd them of counsell the answere to reply.
"These Romeyns," quod the steward, "been wondir soly,
And eke right ymmagynatyf, and of sotil art,
That I am in grete dowte how yee shul depart

Without harm in oon side; our lawis, well thow wost,
Is to pay damagis, and eke also the cost
Of every party plentyf that fallith in his pleynt,
Let hym go quyt, I counsell, yf it may so be queynt."
"I merveil," quod Sirophanes, "of their sotiltė;
But sith that it so stondith, and may noon othir be,
I do woll be counsell," and grauntid Beryn quyte.
But Geffrey thought anothir, and without respite,
"Sirs," he seyd, "me wetith wele that ye wol do us right,
And so ye must nedis, and so ye have us highte;
And therfore, sir steward, ye occupy our plase,
And ye know wele what law wol in this case;
My mastir is redy to perfourm his avow."
"But natheless," quod the steward, "I cannat wete how
To stop all the fresh watir were possibilitė."
"Yis, in soth," quod Geffrey, "who had of gold plenté
As man coud wish, and it myght well be do.
But that is nat our defaute he hath no tresour to.
Let hym go to in haste, or find us suerté,
To make amendis to Beryn for his iniquité,
Wrong, and harm, and trespas, and undewe wexacioune,
Loss of sale, and marchandise, disese, and tribulacioune,
That we have sustenyd thorough his iniquitė.
What vaylith it to tary us? for, though ye sotil pry,
We shull have reson wher ye wol or no;
So woll we that ye knowe, what that we woll do;
In certen full avisid to Isope for to pase,
And declare every poynt, the more and eke the lase,
That of your opyn errours hath pleyn correctioune,
And ageyns his jugement is noon protectioune;
He is yowr lord riall, and soveren jugge, and lele,
That and ye work in eny poynt, to hym liith our apele."
So when the steward had y-herd, and the burgeysis alle,

How Geffrey had y-steryd, that went so nighe the gall ;
What for shame and drede of more harm and repreffe,
They made Sirophanes, weer hym looth or leffe,
To take Beryn gage, and plegg find also,
To byde the ward and jugement of that he had mysdo.
"Now ferthermore," quod Geffrey, "sith that it so is,
That of the first pleyntyf we have sikernes ;
Now to the marchaunt we must nedis answere,
That bergeyned with Beryn, al that his shippis bere,
In covenaunte that he shuld his shippis fill ageyn
Of othir marchandise, that he tofore had seyn
In Hanybaldis plase, howsis to or thre,
Full of marchandise as they might be.
Let us pas thithir, yf eny thing be there
At our lust and liking, as they accordit were."
"I graunt wele," quod Hanybald, "thow axist but righte."
Up arose these burgeysis, "thow axist but right".
The steward and his comperis entrid first the howse,
And saw nothing within, straw, ne leff, ne mowse,
Save tymbir, and the tyle stonys, and the wallis white.
"I trow," quod the steward, "the wynnyng woll be but lite
That Beryn woll now get in Hanybaldis pleynte,
For I can se noon othir but they woll be ateynt ;"
And clepid them in echone, and went out hymselve.
As sone as they were entrid, they saw no maner selve
For soris of their hert, but as tofore is seyd,
The howse was cleen y-swept ; then Geffrey feir they preyde
To help yf he coud ; "let me aloon," quod he,
"Yit shul they have the wers, as sotill as they be."
Evander, the steward, in the mene while,
Spak to the burgeyse, and began to smyle ;
"Though Sirophanes be y-hold thes Romeyns for to curs,
Yit I trow that Hanybald woll put hym to the wers ;

For I am suyr and certeyn within they shul nat fynd."
"What sey ye be my pleynt, sirs?" quod the blynd,
"For I make avow, I woll nevir cese
Tyl Syrophanes have of Beryn a pleyn relese,
And to make hym quyte of his submissioune;
Els wol I have no peté of his contritioune,
But folow hym al so fersly as I can or may,
Tyll I have his eyen both to away."
"Now in feith," quod Machyn, "and I wol have his lyffe;
For, though he scape yow all, with me woll he nat stryffe,
But be right feyn in hert all his good forsake,
For to scape wyth his lyf, and to me it take."
Beryn and his feleship wer within the house,
And speken of their answer, and made but litill rouse,
But evir preyd Geffrey to help yf he coud ought.
"I woll nat faill," quod Geffrey, and was tofore bethought
Of too botirfliis, as white as eny snowe;
He lete them flee within the house, that aftir on the wowe
They clevid wondir fast, as their kynd woll,
Aftir they had flew to rest anothir pull.
When Geffrey saw the botirfliis cleving on the wall,
The steward and the burgeyse in he gan call;
"Lo! sirs," he sayd, "whoso evir repent,
We have chose marchandise most to our talent,
That we fynd herein; behold, sir Hanybal,
The yondir botirfliis that clevith on the wall.
Of such ye must fill our shippis al fyve.
Pluk up thy hert, Beryn, for thow most nedis thryve;
For when we out of Rome in marchant-fare went,
To purchase botirfliis was our most entent.
Yit woll I tell the cause especial and why;
There is a leche in Room, that hath y-made a cry
To make an oyntement to cure al tho ben blynde,

And al maner infirmytees, that growith in mankynde.
The day is short, the work is long; sir Hanyball ye mut hy."
When Hanybald herd this tale, he seyd pryvely
In counsell to the steward, "in soth I have the wers,
For I am sikir by this pleynt that shall I litil purs."
"So me semeth," quod the steward, "for in the world rounde
So many botirfliis wold nat be founde
I trow o ship to charge; wherfor me thinkith best
Let hym have his good ageyn, and be in pese and rest.
And yit is an aventure, and thow scape so
Thy covenaunt to relese without more ado."
The burgessis everichone, that were of that cetė,
Were anoyid sore when they herd of this plee.
Geffrey with his wisdom held them hard and streyte,
That they were acombrit of their own distreyte.
When Hanybald, with his frendis, had spoke of this matere,
They drow them towards Beryn, and seid in this manere;
"Oonly for botirfliis ye com fro your contrey,
And we you tell in sikirnes, and opon our fey,
That so many botirflyes we shul nevir gete;
Wherefore we be avisid othirwise to trete,
That Hanybald shall relese his covenaunt that is makid,
And delyver the good ageyn that from you was ransakid;
And vexe you no more, but let you go in pese."
Nay, forsoth," quod Geffrey, "us nedith no relese;
Ye shull hold our covenaunt, and we shull yours also;
For we shull have reson, wher ye woll or no,
Whils Isop is alyve I am nothing aferd;
For I can wipe all this plee cleen from your berd,
And ye blench onys out of the high wey."
Thei preferid hym plegg and gage, without more deley.
"Now ferthirmore," quod Geffrey, "us ought to procede;

For to the blynd manys poynt we must answer nede;
That, for to tell trowith, he lyvith all to long
For his own fawte, and his own wrong;
On Beryn he hath surmysid, as previth by his plee,
And that ye shull opynlich know wele and see.
For, as I undirstode hym, he seyd that fele yeris
Beryn, that here stondith and he were pertyneris
Of wynnyng and of lesyng, as men it use and doith,
And that they changit eyen, and yit this is sothe;
But the cause of chaunging yit is to yow onknow;
Wherfore I woll declare it, both to high and lowe.
In that same tyme that this burgeyse blynd,
And my master Beryn, as fast as feith might bynde,
Were marchaundis in comyn of al that they myght wyn,
Saff of lyf and lym, and of dedely syn,
Ther fill in tho marchis of al thing such a derth,
That joy, comfort, and solas, and al maner myrth
Was exiled cleen, saff oonly molestatioune,
That abood contenuell, and also dispiratioune.
So when that the pepill wer in most myscheffe,
God that is above, that al thing doith releve,
Sent them such plenté of mony, fruyte, and corn,
Wich turnid al to joy their mournyng al toforn;
Then gaf they them to mirth, revel, pley, and song,
And thankid God above, evir more among,
Of their revelacioune from woo into gladnes;
For aftir sour when swete is com, it is a plesant mes.
So in the meen while of this prosperité,
Ther cam such a pleyer into the same contré,
That nevir thertofore was seyn such anothir;
That wele was the creture that born was of his mothir,
That myght se the mirthis of this jogeloure;
For of the world wide tho dayis he bare the floure.

For there nas man ne woman in that regioune
That set of hymself the store of a boton,
Yf he had not sey his myrthis and his game.
So oppon a tyme this pleyer did proclame
That al manere of pepill his pleyis wold se,
Shuld com oppon a certen dey to the grete ceté.
Then among othir, my master here, Beryn,
And this same blynd, that pledith now with hym,
Made a certen covenaunt, that they wold se
The mervellis of this pleyer, and his sotilté ;
So what for hete of somir, age, and febilnes,
And eke also the long way, this blynd for werynes
Fill flat adown to the erth, o fote ne myght he go ;
Wherfor my master, Beryn, in hert was ful woo,
And seyd, 'my frende, how now? mow ye no ferther pas?'
'No,' he seyd, 'by hym that first made mas ;
And yit I had levir, as God my soule save,
Se thes wondir pleyis then all the good I have.'
'I cannat els,' quod Beryn, 'but yf it may nat be,
But that ye and I mut retourn age,
Aftir ye be refreshid of your werynes,
For to leve yow in this plite it wer no gentilnes.'
Then seyd this blynd, 'I am avisid bet ;
Beryn, ye shull wend thithir without ony let,
And have myn eyen with yow, that they the pley mow se,
And I woll have yours tyll ye come age.'
Thus was their covenaunt made, as I to yow report,
For ese of this blynd, and most for his comfort.
But wotith wele the whole science of all surgery
Was unyd, or the chaunge was made of both eye,
With many sotill enchantours, and eke nygramancers,
That sent were for the nonys, mastris and scoleris ;
So, when all was complete, my mastir went his wey

With this mannys eyen, and saw al the pley ;
And hastly retourned into that plase age,
And fond this blynd seching on hondis and on kne,
Grasping all aboute to fynd that he had lore,
Beryn his both eyen that he had tofore ;
But as sone as Beryn had pleyn knowleche
That his eyen were y-lost, unneth he myght areche
O word, for pure anguysh that he toke sodenly,
And from that day till now ne myght he nevir spy
This man in no plase, ther law was y-mevid ;
But now in his presence the soth is full y-previd,
That he shall make amendis or he hens pas,
Right as the lawe wol deme, ethir more or las.
For my mastiris eyen were betir, and more clere,
Then these that he hath now, to se both fer and nere,
So wold he have his own, that propir were of kynd ;
For he is evir redy to take to the blynde
The eyen that he had of hym, as covenaunt was,
So he woll do the same. Now, soverens, in this case
Ye mut take hede for to deme right ;
For it wer no reson my mastir shuld lese his sight
For his trew hert and his gentilnes."
"Beryn," quod the blind, "tho I woll the relese,
My quarrell, and my cause, and fall fro my pleynt."
"Thow mut nede," quod Geffrey, "for thow art ateynt ;
So mut thow profir gage, and borowis fynd also,
For to make amendis, as othir have y-do.
Sir steward, do us law, sith we desire but right ;
As we been pese marchandis, us longith nat to fight,
But pleyn us to the law, yf so we be agrevid."

Anoon opon that Geffrey these wordis had y-mevid,
The blynd man fond borowis for all his maletalent,
And were y-entrid in the court to byde the jugement ;

For, thoughe that he blynde were, yit had he good plenté,
And more wold have wonne through his iniquité.
"Now herith sirs," quod Geffrey, "thre pleyntifs been assurid,
And as anenst the ferth, this woman hath arerid
That pleynith here on Beryn, and seyth she is his wyfe,
And that she hath many a dey led a peynous lyfe,
And much sorow endurid his child to sustene,
And al is soth and trew; now rightfullich to deme
Whether of them both shall othir obey,
And folowe will and lustis, sir steward, ye mut sey."
And therewith Geffrey lokid aside on this woman,
How she chaungit colours, pale, and eke wan.
"All for nought," quod Geffrey, "for ye mut with us go,
And endure with your husbond both wele and woo;
And wold have take her by the hond, but she awey did breyde,
And, with a grete sighing, these wordis she seyd;
"That ageyns Beryn she wold plede no more;
But gagid with two borowis, as othir had do tofore."
The steward sat as still, as who had shore his hede,
And specially the pleyntifs were in much drede.
Geffrey set his wordis in such maner wise,
That wele they wist they myght nat scape in no wise,
Without loss of goodis, for damage and for cost;
For such wer their lawis, wher pleyntis wer y-lost.
Geffrey had full perseyte of their encombirment;
And eke he was in certen that the jugement
Shuld pas with his mastir; wherfor he anoon,
"Soveren sirs," he seyd, "yit must we ferthir goon,
And answere to this Machyn, that seith the knife is his
That found was on Beryn, therof he seith nat amys.
And, for more prefe, he seith in this manere,
That here stondith present the same cotelere

That the knyfe made, and the precious stonys thre
Within the haft been couchid, that in crystyanité,
Thoughe men wold of purpose make serch and seche,
Men shuld nat fynd in al thing a knyfe that were it liche;
And more opyn prefe than mannys own knowleche
Men of law ne clerkis con nat tell ne teche.
Now sith we be in this manere thus ferforth ago,
Then were spedfull for to know, how Beryn cam first to
To have possessioune of the knyfe, that Machyn seith is his;
To yow unknowe I shall enfourm the trowith as it is.
Now seven yere are passid opon a Tuysday
In the Passioun week, when men leven pley,
And use more devocioune, fastyng, and preyer,
Then in othir tyme, or seson of the yere,
This Beryns fathir erlich wold arise,
And barefote go to chirch to Goddis servise,
And lay hymself aloon from his own wyfe,
In reverence of the tyme, and mending of his lyfe.
So on the same Tuysday, that I tofore nempt,
This Beryn rose, and rayd hym, and to the chirch went,
And mervelid in his hert his fathir was nat there;
And hom-ward went ageyn, with drede, and eke fere.
Into his fathirs chambir sodenlich he rakid,
And fond hym ligg standede, oppon the straw al nakid,
And the clothis halid from the bed awey."
'Out alas!' quod Beryn, 'that evir I saw this dey!'
The meyné herd the noise, how Beryn cried 'alas!'
And cam into the chambir, al that therein was;
But the dole, and the sorowe, and anguyssh that was there,
It vaylith nat at this tyme to declare it here,
But Beryn had most of all, have ye no doute;
And anoon they serchid the body al aboute,
And fond this same knyfe, the poynt right at his hert

Of Beryns fathir, whose teris gan outstert
When he drowgh out the knyfe of his fathirs wound.
Then standede I saw hym fall down to the ground,
In sight of the most part that beth with hym nowe here;"
And they affermyd it for soth, as Geffrey did them lere;
"And yit had I nevir suspecioun, from that day tyll noweth,
Who ded that cursed dede, tyll Machyn with his moweth
Afore yow hath knowlechid that the knyfe is his; 3841
So mut he nedis answer for his deth, y-wis."
When Machyn had y-herd al Geffreyis tale,
He rose of bench sodenly, with colour wan and pale,
And seyd onto Beryn, "Sir, ageyn the
I woll plete no more; for it wer gret peté
To combir yow with actions, that beth of nobill kynde."
"Graunt mercy, sir," quod Geffrey, "but yit ye shull fynde
Borowis, or ye pas, amendis for to make
For our undewe vexacioune, and gage also us take 3850
In sign of submyssioune for your injury,
As law woll and reson; for we woll uttirly
Procede tyll we have jugement finall;
And therfor, sir steward, what that evir fall,
Delay us no longer, but gyve us jugement;
For tristith ye noon othir, but we be fullich bent
To Isope for to wend, and in his high presence
Reherce al our plees, and have his sentence;
Then shull ye make fynys, and highlich be agrevid."
And as sone as the steward herd thes wordis mevid, 3860
"Reson, ryght, and law," seyd the steward, "tho
Ye mut nedis have, wher I woll or no.
And to preve my full wyll, or we ferther goon,"
Quicklich he commaundit, and sparid nevir oon.
Twenty-four burgeysis in law best y-lerid,
Rehersyng them the plees, and how Geffrey answerid,

And on lyf, and lym, and forfetur of good,
And as they wold nat lese the ball within their hood
To draw a-part togithir, and by their all assent
Spere no man on lyve to gyve trew jugement.
And when thes twenty-four burgeysis had y-herd
The charge of the steward, right sore they wer aferd
To lese ther own lyvis, but they demed trowith,
And eke of their neybours they had grete rowith.
For they perseyvid clerelich, in the plee throughout,
Their frendis had the wors side, theref they had no dout.
" And yf we deme trewly, they woll be sore anoyid;
Yit it is betir then we be shamyd and distroyid."
And anoon they wer acordit, and seyd with Beryn,
And demed every pleyntif to make a grete fyne
With Beryn, and hym submyt hoolich to his grace,
Body, good, and catell, for wrong, and their trespase;
So ferforth, tyll at last it was so boute y-bore,
That Beryn had the doubill good that he had tofore;
And wyth joy and myrth, wyth all his company,
He droughe hym to his shippis ward, wyth song and melody.
The steward and the burgeyse from the court bent
Into their own placis; and evir as they went
They talkid of the Romeyns, how sotill they wer,
To aray hym like a fole, that for them shuld answer."
" What vaylith it," quod Hanybald, " to angir, or to curs?
And yit I am in certen I shall fare the wers
All the dayis of my lyfe for this dayis pleding,
And so shal al the remnaunt; and their hondis wryng,
Both Syrophanes, and the blynd, the woman, and Machyn,
And be bet avisid er ther eftsonys pleyne,
And al othir personys wythyn this ceté
Mell the les wyth Romeyns, whils they here be;

" For such anothir fole was nevir yit y-born,
For he did naught ellis but evir with us scorn,
Tyll he had us caught, even by the shyn,
With his sotill wittis, in our own grene."
Now woll I retourn to Beryn ageyn ;
That of his grete lukir in hert was right feyne,
And so was all his meyné, as them ought wele,
That they wer so delyverid from turment like to hell ;
And graciusly relevid out of ther grete myschef,
And y-set above in comfort and bonchef."
"Now, in soth," quod Beryn, "it may nat be denied,
Nad Geffrey and his witt be, we had be distroyid ;
I-thankid be almyghty God omnipotent,
That for our consolacioune Geffrey to us sent !
And in protest opynly, here among yow alle,
Half my good, whils that I lyve, whatevir me befall,
I graunt it here to Geffrey, to gyve, or to sell,
And nevir to part from me, yf it wer his wyl ;
And fare as well as I, a morow and eke on eve,
And nevir for man on lyve his company for to leve."
"Graunt mercy, sir," quod Geffrey, "yowr profir is feir and grete ;
But I desire no more, but as ye me behete,
To bryng me at Room, for this is covenaunte."
"It shall be do," quod Beryn, "and all the remnaunt."
"Deperdeux," quod Geffrey, "therof we shull wele do."
He rayid hym othirwise, and without wordis mo
They went to the dyner, the hole company,
With pipis, and wyth trompis, and othir melody ;
And in the myddis of their mete, gentil women fyve,
Maidens fressh atirid, as myght be on lyve,
Com from the duke Isope, lord of that regioune,

Everich wyth a present, and that of grete renown ;
The first bare a cup of gold, and of asure fyne,
So corouse and so nobill, that I can nat devyne.
The second brought a swerd y-shethid, wyth seyntur
I-fretid all with perelis orient and pure.
The third had a mantell of lusty fresh colour,
The uttir part of purpill, y-furrid with pelour.
The ferth a cloth of gold, a worthy and a riche,
That nevir man tofore saw cloith it liche.
The fift bare a palme, that stode tofore the deys,
In tokyn and sign of trowith and pese ;
For that was the custom through all the contray.
The message was the levir and more plesant to pay ;
The cup was uncoverid, the swerd was out y-brayid,
The mantell was unfold, the cloth along y-layid,
Tho knelid adown echone right tofore Beryn,
The first did the message, that taught was wel and fyne.
" Isope," she seyd, " sir Beryn, that is our lord riall,
And gretith yow, and sendith yow these presentis all,
And joy hath of yowr wisdom, and of yowr governaunce,
And preyd you to com and have with hym plesaunce
To morowe, and se his palayse, and to sport you there,
Yee and all your company." Beryn made noon answere,
But sat styll, and beheld the women and the sondis,
And aftir-ward avisely the swerd first he hondis,
And commaundit therewithall the wymmen wassh and sit,
And pryvelich chargit officers, that with al their wit
To serve them of the best, and make them hertly chere,
Resseyving al the presentis in worshipful manere.
I cannat wele express the joy that they had ;
But I suppose tofore that day that they wer nat so glad,
That they wer so ascapid fortune and myschefe ;

That they might nat regne, but at last fawe
To leve their condicioune, and their fals lawe.
Beryn and Geffrey made them so tame,
That they amendit eche dey, and gat a betir name.
Thus Geffrey made Beryn his enemyes to ovircom,
And brought hym to worship thoroughe his wysdom.
Now God us graunt grace to fynde such a frende
When we have nede; and thus I make an ende.

FINIS.

SCENE IN STROTHER, OR LANGSTROTHDALE,

HUBBERHOLM CHURCH.

I have been favoured with the following note on line 4012 of the *Canterbury Tales*, vol. i, p. 160, by Mr. J. H. Dixon, who has kindly presented the illustrative woodcut.

The valley of Strother, or Langstrothdale, is the upper part of Wharfdale, in the west of Yorkskire ; after leaving the little town of Kettlewell we enter Langstrothdale, a narrow pass between lofty hills ; the right hand being the mountain of Whernside and its connecting hills ; the opposite side of the dale exhibits a range of stupendous cliffs, increasing in altitude till they terminate in the mountain chain of Pennygent. There is only *one* church in the dale, that of Hubberholm, the scene depicted in the vignette, an ancient Norman edifice, with a curious rood screen. Well is it deserving the notice of the archæologist, who, without

any great stretch of imagination, may arrive at the belief that in its lonely hill-girt cemetery repose the bones of two of Chaucer's heroes, "Aleyn and Johan", the "scoleres tuo" of the Reeve's tale. We know the story is medieval, but it does not follow on that account that the heroes are creatures of the poet's imagination. Tyrwhitt observes that the language of the two scholars was not that of Chaucer, and he knew not what dialect it was nor where to find that Strother, with the precise locality of which Chaucer was equally ignorant. Tyrwhitt had never been a rambler amid the wild scenes of Strother, or the language of its simple mountaineers, as spoken at present, would have informed him from whence came Aleyn and Johan, who, it is reasonable to suppose, were two young dalesmen, who left their native scenes for a temporary residence at Cambridge, where Chaucer formed their acquaintance; and struck with their strange and uncouth language, and perhaps manners also, made them the heroes of an old and humorous medieval tale. Believing them to have been real characters, we may also believe that, their studies completed, and their wild oats sown, the scholars returned to their native Strother, and in course of years were there gathered to their fathers. No memorial marks the spot; but the rhymes of Chaucer have immortalized their memories and rendered them ever verdant as the grass that shrouds their nameless graves, and eternal as the surrounding mountains.

For the view in Langstrothdale we are indebted to an original drawing by the Rev. J. F. Fearon, curate of Linton, in Wharfdale; and for the engraving to an amateur artist, George Anderson, Esq., of De Beauvoir town, Kingsland, Middlesex.

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